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GST INCLUSIVE

BACK FROM THE DEAD — SOUTH MELBOURNE HIT TOP SIX SPOT



By Bert van Bedaf

If Lazarus was alive today, he'd wear a blue South Melbourne jumper. South has returned from the dead in a dramatic revival in little over two months.

Only ten weeks ago the Blues were bottom of the national soccer league table, but last Sunday the former champion and last season's losing grand finalist stormed into the top six with an emphatic 3-0 win over Olympic Sharks last Sunday at Bob Jane Stadium.

It's a shaky hold on sixth spot, on equal points (30) with Northern Spirit but ahead on goal difference. Nevertheless, it's a toe-hold in the play-offs and a chance to make amends for last year's disappointing loss.

"This is our tenth game without defeat and we've come a long way from being last. It was an important victory for us tonight," an emotional South coach Eddie Krncevic said afterwards.

"We have a lot of respect for Sydney Olympic. I still think they're one of the best teams in the league and we probably struggled in the first half hour.

"But I don't take anything away from our boys. They were outstanding tonight. It wasn't an easy win and I'm glad to get the three points," he said.

Looking forward, Krncevic urged caution with tough games ahead.

"We got two difficult away games coming up. We have Brisbane this week and Wollongong the week after," Krncevic said.

"We're just going to take it one game at the time. That's what we've been doing for the last ten weeks. It's nice to be in the top

six after 23 rounds, especially since a lot of people had written us off and predicted we'd finish last.

"It's great to be in there, but we've still got a lot of hard work to do," he said.

The South Melbourne machine cranked into action after a devastating run of loss-



Eddie Krncevic: South Melbourne coach has guided his side into the top six.

es because of injuries to senior players. The return of Vaughan Coveny and captain Paul Trimboli has given the team much need magic and drive.

But young talent such as Patrick Kisnorbo, Ray Sekulovski and Massimo Murococa has easily slotted into the formation and performed extremely well.

Add to that the outstanding goal keeping skills of Michael Petkovic, the reliable performances of Steve Iosifidis and Fausto De Amicis and the picture is almost complete.

There's also the mercurial skills of Con Boutsianis and the enduring greatness of 36-year-old defender Mehmet Durakovic that have enabled South Melbourne to mount another assault on the national title.

Krncevic especially praised Durakovic for being best on ground against the Sharks.

"He was outstanding. Mehmet is a quality player and he's been playing like this for the last ten weeks," Krncevic said.

"For someone aged 36 he's got tremendous leg speed. He's been brilliant for us and once again tonight he's proved what



Paul Trimboli: South Melbourne great who has displayed top notch performances for his side's recent revival.

an outstanding athlete and personality he is.

"He doesn't always get as much credit as he should. But he's been brilliant for us and we're very proud to have him at the club," he said.

GALANOS SAYS NO TO FARINA PLAN



By Bert van Bedaf

Victorian Soccer Federation chairman Manny Galanos knocked on the head any plans of Socceroos joining Victorian Premier League clubs in the lead-up to the Oceania Cup in July.

National coach Frank Farina suggested last week that Socceroos playing in the national league should join clubs in their home state leagues any time between April and June.

With hardly any or no overseas players involved, the Socceroos would all or largely be Australian based.

The NSL finishes after the May 12 grand final and players will be idle from then. Farina argued playing Socceroos in the state premier leagues would keep them match fit.

Victorian candidates may be South Melbourne goal keeper Michael Petkovic, defender Fausto De Amicis, forward Con Boutsianis, and Melbourne Knights defender Steve Horvat.

VPL clubs like St Albans, Port Melbourne or Green Gully would welcome any influx of prized players. But one side keen to lift is defending champion Heidelberg United who is last on the VPL ladder.

We need a defender, a midfielder and a striker," Heidelberg coach said after losing 3-0 to Fawkner last Saturday night. What they also would like is another goalkeeper.

The Oceania Cup games are scheduled for the first two weeks in July.



Manny Galanos: VSF Chairman knocking back Farina's plan.

Winning the Cup means qualification for FIFA's Confederation Cup. It offers appearance money of \$4 million, which would come as a godsend to cash-strapped Soccer Australia.

It is understood Soccer Australia chairman Ian Knop has backed Farina in the idea, saying it would be beneficial to the clubs and state federations. But Galanos does not want a bar of it. "I can tell you now, it ain't going to happen," Galanos said. "This idea has no legs. It is nonsense.

"It would be a disaster. Ian

Knop should stick to the job at Soccer Australia and leave the premier league alone," he said.

The VSF stopped the signing of NSL loan players by VPL clubs two years ago to prevent the competition from becoming uneven.

Clubs would sign NSL players on loan to win finals positions, to win championships or avoid relegation. But only the moneyed clubs could afford the top guns and the smaller clubs were left behind.

Since loaning NSL players has been abolished, the VPL has been more evenly balanced.

"Having some clubs field Socceroos would be unfair on other clubs, who would be against it and justifiably so," Galanos said.

"The last couple of years we've had a tight competition, a more evenly balanced competition, because you can't buy yourself out of trouble any more. Why would we start that all over again?" Galanos said.

MENDEZ HOCKS UP EQUALISER AND SPITTING ALLEGATIONS

Despite Gabriel Mendez scoring Sydney United's equaliser against the Northern Spirit to secure a 1-1 home draw, he faces allegations of spitting at the Northern Spirit substitute bench.

Midway through the season Mendez switched from North Sydney Oval to the Bravehearts and exacted revenge on his former club by scoring a free-kick then immediately racing over to the visitors' bench.

The diminutive player then removed his shirt and gestured at Hickman and it was after the match that Hickman raised the allegations of spitting.

"I don't think it was humorous when people run up and spit at you...It was an act of stupidity from a stupid boy" said Hickman.

The incident has turned heads within the Spirit camp with Football Manager Bill Collins calling for an inquiry into the events as referee Mark Shield failed to include the details in his subsequent match report.

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FARINA EXPECTED TO FEEL THE HEAT



Soccerroo coach Frank Farina is under pressure to win the Nation's Cup in July.

Frank Farina's position as Australia's national coach is expected to be challenged when the Soccerroos play their first international matches in more than six months this July.

Farina, who had a one-month stand-off with Soccer Australia over wages and conditions before being re-appointed as national coach in January, is on a four-year contract and is preparing to take the Soccerroos into the Nation's Cup.

Details of the Nations Cup, Oceania's qualifying tournament for next year's lucrative Confederations Cup, were released today, with Australia warm favorite to win a series that includes New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu.

But it is understood to contain performance clauses and anything other than a Nations Cup win would put his future in extreme doubt.

"We have to win, no ques-

tion," said Farina, who admitted being on a "hiding to nothing" for the eight team qualifying competition.

Australia, which won't have played a game since its World Cup qualifying loss to Uruguay in December, will be under the hammer to qualify for the Confederations Cup, with a minimum of \$1.5 million on offer just for turning up. The amount is considered almost expected from ailing SA, estimated to be \$3 million in debt.

Top shelf overseas-based Australians such as Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka, Brett Emerton and Mark Schwarzer will not be available for the tournament and Farina is estimating less than 50 per cent of players will come from outside the National Soccer League.

He envisaged there would be few problems with NSL stars putting their hands up to play despite the likelihood they'd get overlooked when the top overseas players became available for more high profile internationals.

"If players have grievances they don't have to worry about it - they don't have to bother turning up," said Farina. "Whether (we have) 50 per cent overseas-based or 100 per cent overseas based players - every time you pick a squad you go and select the best available."

Farina said Perth Glory striker Damian Mori, who's

criticised Farina's limited use of NSL players in past national squads, would be among the first local players considered.

"Players have the right to opinions. Damian has had his say in the past but he's always turned out and played for his country because he's enjoyed it - he's definitely a player we'll be looking at," he said. Brisbane's Brazilian striker Fernando Rech, arguably the best in the NSL this season, will not be considered because he's unlikely to have resolved citizenship issues by that time.

Farina said he was disappointed at the timing of the tournament, which he'd hoped would be changed by the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) to May - shortly after the NSL finals.

As it stands most of the Australian contingent won't have played a competition game for almost two months by the time the tournament kicks off.

"I think the OFC saw it as an opportunity to bring Australia back to the pack because the dates don't suit anyone," he said. The Nations Cup will be played in New Zealand from July 5-14. Australia is grouped with Fiji and Vanuatu in its pool.

The Soccerroos were shock losers of the Nations Cup to the Kiwis in 1998 but won in 2000 and went on to make the semi-finals of the Confederations Cup last year.

Kewell linked with Anfield move, while Viduka keen to stay at Leeds

Leeds United ace Harry Kewell has been linked with a possible summer move to Anfield following news that former Red Steve McManaman has been sounded out about a move to Elland Road.

Kewell is said to be unhappy at Leeds and he would consider a move to a top club should the opportunity become available.

Kewell, who ironically is a Liverpool supporter, hasn't just been linked with Liverpool, he's also been linked with Arsenal, Manchester United and several European outfits.

This news comes following the Spanish struggle of Steve McManaman at Real Madrid.

While the England international is happy at Real Madrid he is all too aware that he isn't a big hit with the club's management.

If they manage to force him out this summer, which they have tried numerous times to do in the past, he could end up at Leeds and once again team up with best mate Robbie Fowler.

And continuing the sagas surrounding the Aussie stable at Leeds United comes the news that Soccerroo Mark Viduka has no intention of transferring from Elland Road, despite speculation linking him to moves to Roma or Deportivo La Coruna.

Leeds United have struggled on the field since the beginning of 2002 and manager David O'Leary has stated several times that he will need to offload some of the team's big names in order to reduce club debts.

With Roma and Deportivo ready to launch \$51 million bids for the striker, Viduka has openly confessed it would

take a massive offer to lure him away from Yorkshire.

"It would have to be an offer I couldn't turn down to make me leave here," Viduka said.

It was only in last year's offseason that Viduka avoided all the transfer talk by fleeing to Dubrovnik in Croatia. It was there that Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale signed off on a new deal believed to be worth \$64,000 a week.

"Nothing has changed," said Viduka of last year's talk. "There was a lot of speculation last year and I stayed. This time of the season there's always speculation. It's the time when clubs think about making changes in their teams."

"Names are thrown about, and, of course, you're flattered to be linked with famous clubs. But it's a long way between being linked with a club and signing for a club - a real long way."

"I enjoy life here. I live not far from the club, my girlfriend likes England - my two dogs love it. Even the weather has been OK until the last couple of months!"

"I'm just thinking about helping us back into the Champions League. We've got nine games to do it and the boys are buzzing after beating Ipswich. It's amazing the difference one win can make sometimes."

While the Leeds United team as a whole slowly get out of their collective form slump, it has been Viduka who even in the darkest hours has continued to be a menace for opposing defences and the offers coming in from Europe are fully justified for the former Melbourne Knights starlet.



Leeds star Harry Kewell may move to Liverpool in the summer.

SYDNEY UNITED SETTLES DISPUTE WITH SA

Sydney United has settled its debt with Soccer Australia, amounting to \$9,000 and is once again eligible for competition points for the final four rounds of the season.

The Bravehearts failed to pay their debt to the SA after several clubs were warned that unless they settled monies they owed the governing body, their team would be ineligible to gain any competition points effectively handing three competition points to their opponents regardless of the result. While all the rest did so, the Bravehearts failed to

pay about \$9 000 it owed.

That led to a ruling last weekend that Sydney United would be disqualified for any NSL points until the matter was settled, but both Soccer Australia and the club have announced a resolution.

"It was us owing them money and them owing us money, but things have balanced each other out," United general manager Mark Jukic said, while Soccer Australia declined to comment, only confirming the team will be eligible for points in Sunday's clash with Spirit.



Muscat send off, 'plain stupid' bemoans angry Jones

Wolves boss Dave Jones has accused defender Kevin Muscat of 'stupidity' as Wolves' promotion bid lost its way.

Muscat was deservedly sent off nine minutes after the break for recklessly elbowing Grimsby's Michael Boulding, with the red card ultimately condemning Wolves to a rare Molineux defeat.

Relegation-threatened Grimsby capitalised on the man advantage with Andy Todd heading home an 80th-minute winner, his third goal in six games on loan from Charlton.

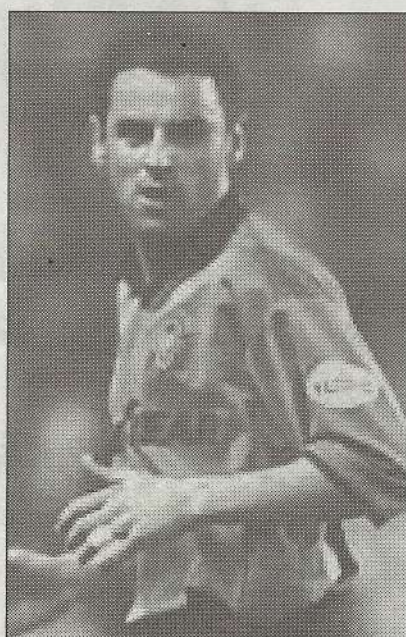
Jones described this defeat as 'a blip', but was left unhappy with Australia international Muscat's dismissal.

"It was an act of stupidity in what was a bad performance all round," said Jones.

"I don't want to hear any excuses. He knows what he has done, so I won't accept that it was frustration or something like that - it was just plain stupid."

This is yet another incident in the colourful history of the former South Melbourne and Australian Youth captain. While he is recognised as a hardman of the English first division, his take no prisoners approach to defending has often hindered his progression into becoming an elite marker and Premier League material.

The fiery Soccerroo has recently been linked to a move northward into the Scottish Premier



Muscat's sending off turned the game.

League. Many critics regarding this league as the dominion of the two big Glasgow rivals in Celtic and Rangers however the possible move north may see Muscat play in the European competitions that is the highlight of any European based professional.

AFRICAN CHIEF LAUNCHES CHALLENGE AGAINST BLATTER

African chief Issa Hayatou has launched his campaign to replace Sepp Blatter as FIFA president by vowing to make the world game's governing body more open.

Hayatou, a one-time professional player who has headed the African Football Confederation (CAF) since 1988, promised reforms that would usher in "a new era of clean and transparent administration" at FIFA.

Hayatou, 53, from Cameroon, won immediate backing from the head of the powerful European federation, UEFA chief Lennart Johansson, as well as South Korean chief Chung Mong-joon.

Johansson, who lost a close race to Blatter in 1998, flew to Cairo for

Saturday's CAF board meeting, which endorsed Hayatou's bid.

The Swede called Hayatou "not only a man of honor but also a very productive man who knows the meaning of transparency, loyalty and solidarity."

Chung, who had been considering running this year, said in Seoul that he agreed Hayatou should run as a "unified candidate" against Blatter.

Under Blatter, "the world football organization became embroiled in internal strife and division in leadership," Chung said in a statement, adding it was time for a figure from Africa or Asia to lead FIFA.

The election for FIFA's top job is scheduled for May 29 in Seoul.



FIFA President Sepp Blatter faces a challenge from Issa Hayatou.



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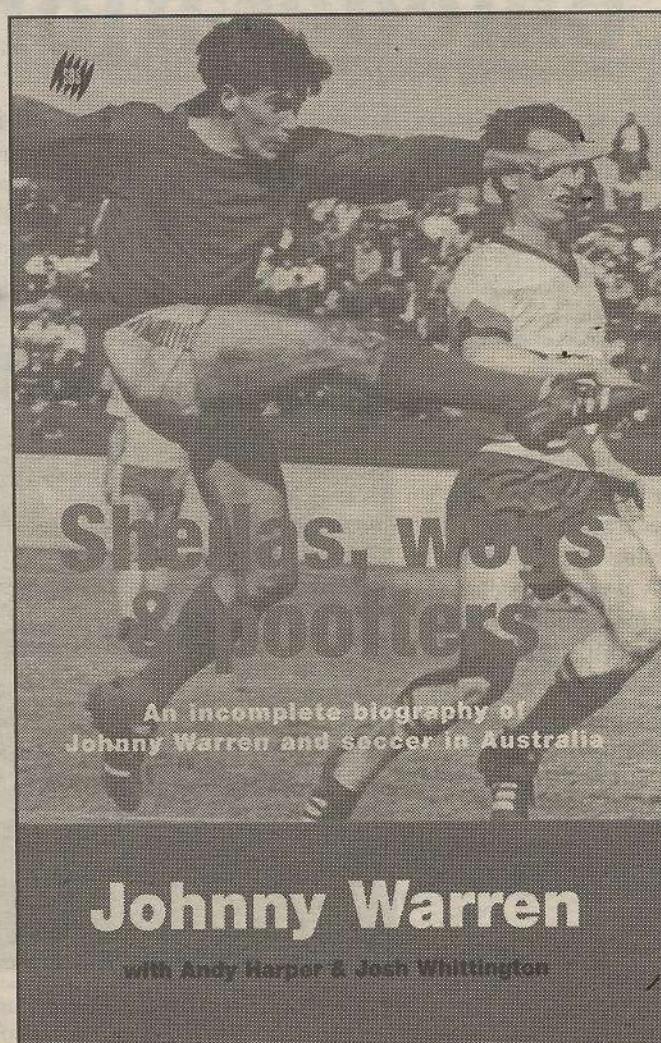
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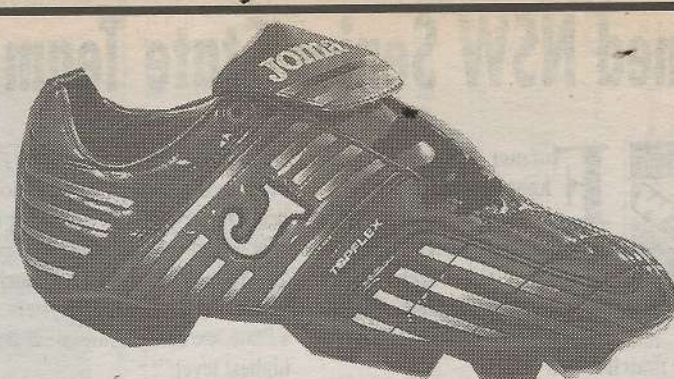
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Australia to launch Confederations Cup bid



Soccer Australia chairman Ian Knop is spearheading a campaign to bring next year's Confederations Cup to Australia.

FIFA have set a deadline of May 1 for confirmed bids and Knop will meet with Victorian Major Events in the next few weeks to discuss the proposal.

So far the US, Egypt, South Africa, Portugal and France and Switzerland have all expressed interest in hosting the eight-team tournament.

Knop told the Sydney Morning Herald: "We want it [The Confederations Cup]

and we intend to launch a strong bid"

"I think Australia has proved itself capable of hosting major sporting events,

and with all the difficulties we have had recently, this represents a huge opportunity to lift the game".

Most recently Australia

hosted the 2000 Olympics, with the capital cities of Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, along with Sydney hosting several games.

Only last year the Melbourne Cricket Ground once again hosted the last of Australia's World Cup qualifying games where a crowd in excess of 70 000 people turned out to see the Socceroos achieve a one-nil victory.

Strengthening Australia's bid for hosting rights is the fact that in the past two World Cup Qualifying campaigns the national team are undefeated on home soil and while not enough to warrant a Finals berth at either France of South Korea/Japan, the prospect of a home side matching it with the best teams on the planet could be too tempting for FIFA to pass up.



Ian Knop: Soccer Australia Chairman spearheading a campaign to stage the Confederation Cup.

Bresciano Opts for Italian rather than English Football

In recent weeks, speculation has circulated around the football world that Australian international Marco Bresciano was wanted by English Premier League side Leeds United.

The 22-year-old midfielder stated firmly that although the English Premier League is good, he's mind is on reaching the Serie A with current club Empoli.

Currently in Serie B, Empoli are leading the league with only a few games to go and look certain for promotion next season to the top flight.

Having had a star studded season this year, Bresciano was also linked with Serie A giants Juventus and Parma.

Speaking on his speculated move Bresciano said: "I don't think about the transfer market. Even if many Australians have played football in England, I would like to continue my career in Italy," said Bresciano.

The Aussie stars main priority at this stage is guiding his side to the Serie A which he believes can be done. "Some say that 65 points is

enough for us and I believe another four wins would seal our promotion," said Marco.

Alongside Bresciano at Empoli is also former Carlton lad Vince Grella. Both Australians seem to have taken the Italian Serie B by storm this year, and with only a few matches left, looks set to stake their claim as top players in one of the toughest leagues in the world - the Serie A.



Marco Bresciano: Aussie star content on staying in Italy.

Former Socceroo Greg Woodhouse named NSW Senior State Team Coach



Former Socceroo goalkeeper, Greg Woodhouse, has been appointed to succeed Brian Brown, as the coach of the New South Wales Senior Men's State team for three interstate matches this year.

Woodhouse, who led the Bonnyrigg White Eagles to the inaugural NSW Premier League championship last year, was clearly delighted with his new coaching role.

"It's a great feeling! I've played for the NSW State team right from under 12 level to the seniors and to be selected as Senior State Coach is truly a great honor, especially when you take into account that Brian Brown (Blacktown City) and Tam Finlayson (Parramatta Eagles) are also very worthy of the job," said Woodhouse.

The NSW State team play their first interstate game against Queensland at Perry Park on ANZAC Day, Thursday 25 April, and will be looking to avenge their loss to the Maroons suffered last year at Gabbie Stadium.

The Blues then tackle South Australia at Hindmarsh Stadium on Saturday 18 May and host Victoria at Melita Stadium, home of NSW Premier League club Parramatta Eagles, on Monday 10 June.

Woodhouse was clear when he stated what State of

Origin Soccer meant to him, "It's a great idea because the level of competition is so even. We beat Queensland at Perry Park in 2000 and they beat us last year, so NSW has something to prove this time around. It's not much use having the best youth development system in Australia, if as a State, we cannot translate that into results at the highest level."

Woodhouse, who played 152 National Soccer League games for Western Suburbs, Leichhardt and Sydney United, will pick a twenty-member squad on Monday 18 March, with that figure to be trimmed to sixteen. Woodhouse continued, "There's very little doubt that I will be picking players who in form and who are playing for the top five or six clubs, namely, Parramatta Eagles, Bonnyrigg, Blacktown City, Leichhardt, Fairfield, and Belconnen. I want to win all three games and therefore I will pick the best team available."

The former international goalkeeper, has developed the Bonnyrigg White Eagles into a phenomenal attacking unit and will transfer that style of play to the NSW team, "Yes, it will be a no holds barred policy against Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. Watch out for the goals!"

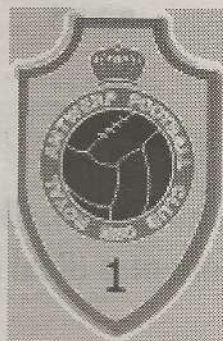
2002 INTERSTATE FIXTURES:

- GAME 1: NSW v Queensland**
(at Perry Park, Brisbane), Thursday 25 April 2002
- GAME 2: NSW v South Australia**
(at Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide), Saturday 18 May 2002
- GAME 3: NSW v Victoria**
(at Melita Stadium, Sydney), Monday 10 June 2002



Greg Woodhouse: New NSW state coach.

Colosimo heads to Belgium for trials



Australian international Simon Colosimo looks set to resurrect his European career by trailing with Belgium First Division club Antwerp this week.

The 23-year-old has had a rough time this season, as his move to Nationwide First Division club Manchester City ended prematurely.

After spending only 6 months of his intended 3-year-deal with City, Colosimo was languishing in the reserves for the remainder of last season.

City coach Kevin Keegan had agreed that if Simon didn't start in ten games for the side, he'd be released from the club.

This was to be Simon's fate as the ex-South Melbourne defender failed to make the grade due to good performances by three fellow players in the same position.

Colosimo did have a stint with Second Division side Stoke City, however did not sign any contract.

The defender has a week's trial to prove

himself at the Belgium side, and if successful, would be a great place to kick-start his professional soccer career again.

Tipped as being one of the hottest youngsters a few years back, Simon will always be remembered as the player who was injured by Manchester United star Andy Cole when Alex Ferguson's side toured Australia a few years back.



Simon Colosimo: Heading to Belgium for trials.

TOTAL FOOTBALL FOR ELITE YOUNGSTERS

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Of the program, Dahdal states: "There is a lot of great technical programs around and I don't want to undermine them at all. But I feel that you must have training where you apply a technique to a game situation, or else it's a waste of time. This is a total program."

"Sometimes players are physically up to it, but not mentally up to it, something may have happened at school and they may not be able to give their best", he says.

"I will always teach players that if you want to do something, do it well." The "Football Elite" program can be viewed in its entirety at www.fbelite.com.

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2001 Oceania Player of the Year

By Mark Stavroulakis

Season 2001 heralded a number of Oceania stars, who across the world, made huge impacts in their respective leagues.

Time has come to announce the winner of the 2001 Oceania player of the year whereby journalists from across the Oceania region voted their coveted player. Last year's winner was Leeds and Australian striker Mark Viduka, with Leeds team-mate Harry Kewell coming a close second. This year its been the opposite, Harry Kewell has taken out the award with 87 votes, while Viduka came a close second with 83.

It's 'Kewell the Jewel's' second win as the Aussie star won the title back in '99. Australia's Brett Emerton, currently playing his football at Feyenoord, came in third while Craig Moore finished fourth.

An all Australian line-up faired in the top five of the list, Tahiti's Maramas Vahirua who plays his football in France for Nantes was the highest placed non-Australian in 6th position.

Here is the entire list of the Oceania Player of the Year Poll:

- 1-HARRY KEWELL (Australia) 87 votes
- 2-MARK VIDUKA (Australia) 83
- 3-BRETT EMERTON (Australia) 59
- 4-CRAIG MOORE (Australia) 23

Then came: Mark Schwarzer (Australia) 19, Maramas Vahirua (Tahiti) 17, Ryan Nelsen (New Zealand) 15, Ivan Vicelich (New Zealand) 8, Christian Karembeu (New Caledonia) 7, Mark Burton (New Zealand) 6, Commins Menapi (Solomon Islands) 5, Richard Iwai (Vanuatu) 4, Paul Agostino (Australia) 4, Ramon Djamali (Tahiti) 3, Esala Masi (Fiji) 3, Tim Cahill (Australia) 3, Vaughan Coveny (New Zealand) 1, Danny Tiatto (Australia) 1, Kevin Muscat (Australia) 1, Damian Mori (Australia) 1, Loko Taufahema (Tonga) 1.



Harry Kewell: Winner of the 2001 Oceania Player of the Year.

Stallions move into Sharks' territorial waters

By Daniel Kuziow

The Marconi Stallions look set to ride into the south of Sydney this Saturday night to face the Olympic Sharks on the back of recent goal scoring hero Royce Browlie.

In the last three games Brownlie has scored six goals including the injury-time winner that sank the visiting Adelaide Force at Marconi Stadium just a week ago, and his form of late has seen a mini revival in the fortunes of his Stallions side who pose a serious threat to the aspirations of the NSL final chasing teams.

The Olympic Sharks meanwhile will look at continuing their impressive home record against their Sydney rivals in a derby match flavoured with all the passions of their glorious histories and the years of fierce soccer rivalry that have become a part of National Soccer League folklore.

In their last outing at Toyota Park against the title chasing Brisbane Strikers Dylan Macallister proved the difference in their one goal victory that saw the Sharks reduced to ten men for almost an hour following the abrupt dismissal of Steve Laybutt.

The visiting Stallions will want to improve a dismal

away record before seasons end, having only achieved two away victories to date and Saturday's derby against the Sharks is the perfect tonic to put some colour back into a dwindling road-trip history.

Both teams are at their best when more than three competition points are on the line. Olympic will be looking at cementing their position towards the top of the NSL table while Marconi will be looking to continue their recent attacking form in a traditional derby that is sure to be electric from the very first while, until the very last.



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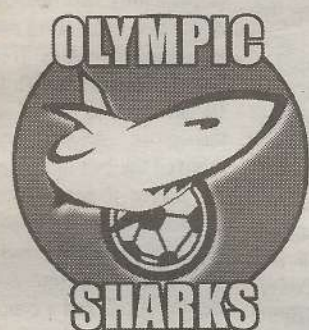
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National Soccer League

Marconi Stallions 2 Adelaide City Force 1

By Stuart Jones

Marconi snatched an undeserved victory at home on Saturday night with a last kick of the match goal to take away a 2-1 win.

Their opponents were Adelaide City, of course no longer under Zoran Matic and still suffering from a horror run of results.

Adelaide City finally scored, after three 3-0 losses in a row, but could not hold on for a point. They had started well enough although shots on target were hard to come by.

Ante Kovacevic, who was outstanding in the City midfield, put in a long-range drive in the 17th minute, which was turned around the post by Michael Turnbull. Turnbull was unable to reach a shot from Scott Tunbridge on the right in the 25th minute but the post looked to have saved the home side as the

shot cannoned off it. However it was a false dawn as the ball landed at the feet of Nick Budin who scored his first goal for Adelaide City in the NSL.

The goal did not seem to wake the Stallions up as both Kovacevic and Tunbridge had good first half opportunities to double the score. However the visitors did not make the very lethargic home team really play and Marconi were no longer the same opponents in the second half as Lee Sterrey tore shreds off them in the sheds at half time. Brendan Renaud came on at the break and his introduction changed the game almost immediately.

Renaud put in a cross to the far post for Royce Brownlie to bring it down, beat two Adelaide players and score. That was the 52nd minute and now Marconi were playing stronger in attack. Alex Brosque put a good chance straight into the hands of keeper Cagalj before Budin reminded the Stallions

of the fight they had by running through much of the team (although he failed to put a final shot in). Minutes later and it seemed the away side had regained the initiative. A Scott Tunbridge free kick was flicked on at the near post by Aurelio Vidmar and at the back Robbie Saraceno headed it goal-wards only to see Michael Turnbull push the ball away at full extension. Then Saraceno put in a ball to a free Tunbridge but he headed a pretty easy chance wide of the post.

Through the last ten minutes City piled on the pressure although like the rest of the game this period was not dominated by memorable events. In fact what will mostly be remembered is the virtual last kick of the game. Alex Brosque played the ball into the area and Royce Brownlie made a crossing run to collect the ball. Brownlie then stepped back past Ian Fyfe and chipped the City goalkeeper Cagalj and put it in the back of the net for a very late winner. (Not the first scored so late by Marconi at home this summer.)

City has not won since March 2001 away from home and tonight was certainly the night they most looked like doing it. However the trip home will be a long hard one and the coach/owner of Adelaide City has much to think about. Bob D'Ottavio has not been coach of Adelaide City since 1982.

His side almost made it a reasonable return for him. He said after the match that he thought his team deserved a draw, and captain Aurelio Vidmar agreed with him. Vidmar said, "I thought we deserved a goal but we let in a stupid goal at the end which really is the story of our season."

His coach echoed Vidmar's thoughts, "I think we were naive at the end, we should have locked it up in injury time and with the score at 1-1."

We really exposed ourselves at the back. However we are just a young side apart from Kovacevic, Vidmar and Veart, and we have to learn from experiences like tonight — I just hope we do."

Lee Sterrey was pleased with his side's second half performance and their character right at the end of the game. "First half we were poor and lethargic, like we did not want to be out there."

However once a few tiles fell off in the dressing room at half time we were completely different in the second period. Considering we had so much to play for the first half was confusing. We started well in the second half but once we scored we went into our shell once more. We tried to slow the game down which makes no sense. However we scored right at the end and it shows the type of character we have at the

club this year, for which I am very proud." Overall City's best player was Ante Kovacevic in midfield, whilst Marconi's man of the moment was Angelo Costanzo, not forgetting to mention the two goal star Royce Brownlie. Marconi only have an outside chance of making the semi-finals but it continues to be mathematically possible and nobody is going to give up on that unlikely dream for this season just yet.



Two goal hero Royce Brownlie fights for possession with Force's Ante Kovacevic.

Wollongong Wolves 3 Brisbane Strikers 1

By Otto Bader

This match deserved a better crowd than the 2,372 die-hards who saw a great performance by the Wolves.

The home team had Ben Blake out injured, Greg Sharland dropped to Youth Grade and Paul Reid still overseas. New into the side came youngster Liam Austin, a promising striker just 18 years old.

The game started off well for Brisbane, and they opening the scoring in the sixth minute with a well planned move for an easy tap-in to Kris Trajanovski.

The Wolves did not look too great in the first part but woke up after scoring the equaliser in the 22nd minute from Stuart Young ready to finish the move.

From then on the Wolves started to dominate play, the midfield moved the ball around and the opportunities came flooding in. First Wells missed a sitter, then Naum Sekulovski headed over.



Stuart Young: The veteran strikers two goals gave the victory and a glimmer of hope for the Wolves in their pursue of a finals spot.

Brisbane's star player Fernando Rech blasted a free-kick from 25 metres out over the bar and was stopped twice by good goal-keeping from Wolves custodian Dean Anastasiadis.

Brisbane changed the tempo and tried to hold on for a draw, perhaps lucky not to be behind at the break with a one-all scoreline.

One would have thought Brisbane would come out firing for the second half since more was a stake for them, perhaps reaching the vital second position on the table. But it wasn't to be as the Wolves looked well in control and it was only a matter of time until the second goal seemed evident. When Wells hit the Brisbane crossbar, Stuart Young was at the right spot to head the rebound into the net in the 52nd minute.

The Wolves seemed to be more confident now and started to over-run the opposition. They put up a solid performance with strong attacking moves. Giant defender David Cervinski was hurt badly and had to be replaced by George Souris, just coming back from a long injury spell himself.

Cervinski will be sidelined for the rest of the season, a major blow for the Wolves. Brisbane made several changes to breathe new life into their game but to no avail. They had a couple of half-chances but nothing the Wolves could not handle.

On the contrary, the home side had the better opportunities with Wells and Liam Austin outstanding. In fairness to Brisbane they hit the crossbar late in the game when Fernando Rech looked threatening.

Otherwise the Wolves defence had him well under control. The goal of the day came from a 20 pile-driver when youngster Naum Sekulovski hit the ball into the top corner of the net for a three-one scoreline.

Overall, the Wolves on the day, were the better team. Coach Ron Corry was reasonably satisfied, saying in the first 30 minutes his defence was not settled but after the equaliser, the boys did play well, the younger players fitted in and did their part to unsettle the opposition.

Kingz FC 1 Parramatta Power 7

By Stuart Jones

Parramatta took the three points home from New Zealand this weekend with an emphatic 7-1 victory over the hapless Football Kingz.

It was Parramatta who not surprisingly started the strongest but Michael Theoklitos saved well. The first major attack had come through Ahmad Elrich down the left but Adam Kwasnik had his attempt diverted away by Theoklitos.

Then three minutes later Liam Reddy saved a Harry Ngata header from going in

the back of the net from an Andy Vlahos cross.

Paul Urlovic then had a long shot, which was deflected away by Steve Eagleton. In the same minute the ball was in the back of the home team's net. The ball came from the right and a Kingz player half hit it, then the defence missed it for Harry Ngata to put it in from point blank range.

For the opening half hour it was the Kingz who seemed to have the breaks, although they could not turn these into great scoring opportunities. The actual scoring opportunities fell to the likes of Kwasnik and Elrich but Theoklitos

seemed up to everything that was thrown at him.

However his night was to start to fall apart in the 28th minute as he let in a goal he would soon rather forget. Peter Bennett took a free kick from outside the area and the ball deflected off the defensive wall and proceeded to slip under the Kingz keeper's body and into the back of the net.

Theoklitos made up for his error by his saves over the next ten minutes and in fact Harry Ngata nearly stole the ball off the Parramatta defence for an opportunity to go ahead once more. Instead in the 40th minute it was Power who went ahead. Brett Holman ran onto a long pass and nutmegged the keeper to put his side up by a goal at the break.

As a team Parramatta played much better in the second half and in the 51st minute Kwasnik put his side further in front. Ten minutes later and he broke down the left once more and ran through the defence only for his shot to be pushed away by the keeper.

However that was not the end as the clearance landed at the feet of Ahmad Elrich who put it in the back of an unguarded net.

The Kingz were now giving the ball away in defence and in the midfield and fresh substitute John Buonavoglia almost made it 5-1 but the final ball to him was just cut out by John Markovski. In the 73rd minute Buonavoglia saw his shot on

target just parried away by Theoklitos. However soon after the Kingz midfield gave up possession again and Brett Holman saw his first shot come off the keeper. However once more the ball went straight to a Parramatta player, this time Holman himself, and the ball was in the back of the net at the second time of asking.

Sean Douglas saved the day for the home side in the 76th minute as he blocked Holman's shot at a hat trick. Two minutes later and Harry Ngata could not put respectability into the score as he fired wide. Five minutes from time Alex Tobin put a long ball through for Buonavoglia to chase and then cross. Ahmad Elrich received the ball in the area but played it across to an unmarked Matt Thompson who made it six for Power.

In the closing few minutes the Kingz had a couple of half chances but Liam Reddy was up to the challenges the likes of Andy Vlahos set him. Just to put an exclamation mark on the result Ahmad Elrich ran onto a through ball and slid the ball home for seven right on full time. Even after that Holman hit the woodwork but in the end it finished 1-7 to the Power.

Despite the score-line the match had not all been about Parramatta Power with their defence, especially in the first half, often seeming confused as the Kingz players ran at them. The Kingz actually looked good for the opening half hour but the discipline of that period fell away and for the final hour they were giving the ball up far too easily. It was Parramatta's best win and the Kingz worst loss ever.



Brett Holman: The 18-year-old young gun scored a brace in Power's 7-1 drubbing of the hapless Kingz.

National Soccer League

Perth Glory Newcastle United

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory was unable to celebrate the official presentation of the minor-premiership trophy with a victory in front of their faithful fans at Perth Oval last Saturday after Newcastle United's Peter Tsekenis snatched a stunning equaliser with literally seconds remaining in the match.

The seesawing 2-2 draw between the league's top-two sides proved to be a compelling encounter for the 12,449 audience and one which had its just conclusion.

"We expected a hard game but a little bit disappointed that we gave a goal away at the end," said Glory assistant coach Alan Vest.

"We have certainly got to concentrate more in a situation like that. Basically, we lost a bit of concentration and went to sleep; but in the end though, I think it was a fair result," he said.

Similarly, United boss Ian Crook was pleased to have grabbed a point from the game; which is in fact their eleventh drawn match of the season.

"We knew we were going to be in for a tough game," said Crook. "Perth is the best side in the competition by far and proved that by winning the title so convincingly. After we scored we expected Glory would have periods in the game when they'd have chances and they in fact could have had four goals in the space of ten minutes. I thought we dug in, worked hard and delighted that the boys then came back to pull something out of the match," said Crook.

Glory was forced to play the game minus two of their senior defenders in Matt Horsley and Jamie Harnwell, due to injury. This opened the door for fringe players David Tarka and Gary Faria to prove their worth with finals football just around the corner.

For the first time this season, the Glory found themselves a goal down in just the

9th minute following a lively opening which required both goalkeepers to be on their best behaviour; Glory's Jason Petkovic especially, was the busier of the two.

Newcastle's well-orchestrated goal came from a move started and finished by Matt Bingley and Joel Griffiths who sent Robbie Middleby tearing up the right flank before he centred into the danger-



Damien Mori: The Glory striker notched up his 17th goal of the season.

zone. Petkovic could only parry Bingley's header and Joel Griffiths was ideally placed to scramble the ball over the line.

The visitors held onto the advantage until mid-way through the second period, but not before surviving a string of glaring misses from the normally reliable Bobby Despotovski and Damian Mori.

The first of their clear-cut chances came three minutes after United's goal when Despotovski barged his way through two defenders and found himself with just goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame to beat.

The talented front man elected to attack the goal himself rather than square the ball to the unmarked Mori, but his shot on goal rolled agonisingly past the wrong side of the upright.

Despotovski's next raid was three minutes further on when he shot across the face of the goal after Scott Miller had cleverly sent him goal bound. Beltrame was kept on his toes again in the 20th minute after a deflected strike that looked to be dropping into the net, was athletically tipped over the top. Despotovski came closer to equalising nine minutes before the break with a well-taken free kick that crashed into the far upright.

United suffered a blow to their back

line seconds later, when Michael Prentice was forced to leave the field with an asthma attack which was complicated by tonsillitis. It is believed the rookie defender was kept under observation overnight before he jetted back to Sydney.

Glory eventually drew level after 72 minutes when Gareth Naven, who was making a welcome return to the first eleven for the first time this season, picked out Despotovski on the right wing. The Perth forward then delivered the ball to Brad Hassell on the face of the United penalty area, where the hard-working middleman climbed high and steered an accurate header past a disbelieving Beltrame.

Mori put the home side in front three minutes from time after Maloney first side-stepped his marker Andy Roberts before lining up the NSL's all-time champion goal-buster to fire the ball into the roof of the net from close-range.

But just as Perth fans were leaving the ground believing their team had secured a 16th win of the season, Newcastle's seasoned midfielder Tsekenis spoiled Glory's minor-premiership festivities by heading home a Blagojevic corner and celebrated by motioning to the stunned Glory fans that he has a hearing problem.

Sydney United Northern Spirit

By Tim Ciamakamis

In extremely hot and dry conditions at Edensor Park in western Sydney last Sunday afternoon, United managed to take points away from the Northern Spirit with a hard fought 1-1 draw.

In 35-degree heat, a crowd of 2,280 (United's smallest of the season), witnessed referee Mark Shields take the unusual step of enforcing periodic drinks breaks during the game. Although the heat is unseasonal (but not uncommon), the questions are asked as to why United have brought forward the kick-off times of their fixtures to 4pm and considering this particular match wasn't televised and played by local teams, why couldn't the kick-off have been delayed.

"With today's conditions, whoever was going to score first, it was going to be difficult to peg them back. It would have been a far better spectacle if the game was played in the evening," said Spirit coach Mick Hickman. "It was difficult trying to watch the game (today) let alone trying to play it," quipped United's Branco Culina.

With United only playing for pride, the onus was upon the Spirit to secure maximum points to try to maintain that sixth spot on the table. Even though United dominated possession, it was the Spirit who did score first and try to hold onto the lead. Refuting claims that his troops sat back, Hickman was obviously disappointed they didn't get the three points. "It's typical that if anyone was going to score, it was going to be Gigi Mendez", (the subject of a mid-season transfer between the two clubs), reflected Hickman.

Considering the heat, the match opened at a furious pace when, inside the first minute, United's Paul Bilokapic struck a 30 metre curling free-kick only for keeper Lupce Acevski to tip onto the crossbar and over for a corner. An indication of Mendez's enthusiasm for today's clash came two minutes later when he spotted the Spirit keeper of his line and tied to chip him from 40 metres out. With both teams adopting a methodical passing game, they both created good chance to score (from

close range) on a number of occasions but were unable to convert. On 30 minutes played, United's Commins Menapi fired in a bullet cross from the right to the far post finding the ever-green Aytek Genc, who knocked the ball back into the middle only to see Ante Dzur shoot over the bar from 6 metres.

Spirit retaliated two minutes later when Craig Foster ran down their right wing and picking out Ryan Griffith's near post angled run, only for his 6 metre effort to rebound of the post.

Against the run of play in the 41st minute (officially 37th), Pablo Cardozo produced a bit of magic for the desperate Spirit. He received a low through ball threaded past a number of defenders on the edge of the box, turned and cut inside his marker, then chip the advancing keeper to record his 12th goal of the season and put his team into the lead.

Searching for the killer goal, Spirit had another great chance in the 66th minute when captain Craig Foster found himself in space with the ball 20 metres from goal. Surprisingly instead of lining up a shot, he decided to dribble to wards goal eventually being crowded out and the opportunity lost.

Further end to end football produced nothing clinical until the 75th minute when United substitute Goran Talevski was supplied a through ball from halfway only to be



Gabriel Mendez: Scored the equaliser for United against his former side.

fouled 20 metres out from goal. From the ensuing direct free-kick, the mercurial Mendez chipped the wall and curled his effort perfectly into the top left corner of the goal, to level the score at 1-1 and where upon he produced his controversial goal celebration in front of the Spirit bench and ultimately receiving a yellow card.

To compound matters further for the Spirit, a minute later, midfielder Robbie Enes received a second yellow card for dissent and was sent off. It gave United a numerical advantage in the extreme playing conditions, which contributed to the game slowing down in action and ultimately ending in a draw.

Resigned to the fact that his club is only playing for pride, a relaxed Branco Culina explained, "It's very difficult to have to put young players into the team when the team is struggling; it doesn't do much for their confidence, and it's a credit to the players for the effort they produce". "Gabriel Mendez has been terrific for us since he joined the club, unfortunately we have lost other experienced players".

"Every game we play there is only a goal in it with the only team to have beat us convincingly was Olympic, and that day we had ten first graders missing; you can't get blood out of stone. For us to get a point (at this stage of the season), I'm pleased", reconciled Culina.

A positive Mick Hickman commented, "Having four regular players out, I was happy with how the boys played as they are giving everything they can. We're in the six, which is a lot different to previous years and getting some pride back they now don't want to loose. We're playing some good football and going forward, but there is still a long way to go; we're only halfway there. When we get it all sorted out eventually, we will be a reasonable side. We are going in the right direction and I'm pleased with it".

Asked to comment on Cardozo's quiet game, Hickman retorted, "Pablo's quiet and scores the goal. He can be quite all the time and score the goals for me. I'm happy with Pablo as he has been superb for me this year".

"We got a point and we're still fighting for sixth spot. We are going to have to rely on some other results to go for us, as it looks as if its going to go to the final game (of the regular season)", concluded a spirited Hickman.

Hickman was quick to point the finger at ex-Spirit player Gabriel Mendez and his vulgar act of spitting after he had scored the equaliser for United.

South Melbourne Olympic Sharks

By Bert van Bedaf

South Melbourne stormed into finals contention after a confident 3-0 win against Olympic Sharks at Bob Jane stadium last Sunday.

South captain Paul Trimboli, youngster Ray Sekulovski (in injury time) and emphatic striker Vaughan Coveny accounted for the goals that put the Melbourne side in sixth place ahead of Northern Spirit on goal difference. "This was a big victory for us," South coach Eddie Krncevic said.

"This is the tenth game (in a row) without defeat. We've come a long way from being last. We're in the top six for the first time this season.

"But there's still a lot of hard work to be done. We have two difficult away games against Brisbane Strikers and Wollongong Wolves.

"We're taking it one game at the time like we've been doing for the past weeks," he said.

Despite the loss, Olympic is still very much in the top six. But the stinging defeat got bells ringing. Olympic coach Gary Phillips described the game's refereeing (by West Australian Angelo Nardi) as "a disgrace".

"We're obviously disappointed with the result. Other than that I thought we were always in the game until we conceded two goals in the first half.

"Where the referee got two minutes from added-on I've got no idea. It thought it was a disgrace. But good luck to South Melbourne. They were obviously a bit more desperate than we were. "It's been an eye-opener for us, a wake-up call and obviously we've got a lot more work to do," he said. If there were points for posses-

sion and passing, South Melbourne would

have been ahead hands down, so fast and fluent did the home side circulate the leather in a first half that only came to life in the last ten minutes and injury time.

It took another flash of individual brilliance by Trimboli to set the game alight and give South a deserved lead after 38 minutes.

South's Mr Magic took the ball off teammate Con Boutsianis and inside the box got past two Olympic defenders before driving it past Clint Bolton into the far corner.

Sekulovski got the crowd in a frenzy two minutes into first-half time added-on, when he drilled the ball high into the net at the far post after Boutsianis had sent it across the face of goal from the left. With a two-goal lead at half time and knowing Northern Spirit had played a 1-1 draw with Sydney United, South had put a foot in the top-six with 45 minutes remaining.

The Sharks tried everything to get back into the game but stranded repeatedly on the four-men South wall of Fausto De Amicis, Patrick Kisorbo, Mehmet Durakovic and Steve Iosifidis in front of the reliable Michael Petkovic.

Hiroyuki Ishida worked tirelessly and Tom Pondeljak made Petkovic earn his 'keeper's fee with several shots on target, but South's possession game and its two goals proved hurdles Olympic could not overcome.

Coveny gave substitute Peter Buljan the perfect opportunity to seal the game with five minutes remaining. But the struggling striker poked the ball just wide of the far post after running on to Coveny's cross from the right.

Hard-working Coveny made sure of the win himself when he blasted South's third goal into the net in the 89th minute to send a message to other finals contenders that last year's losing grand finalist is back in the race.

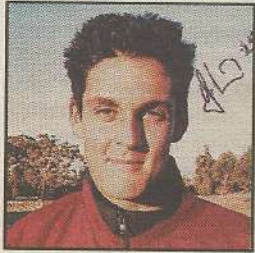


South Melbourne goal scorer Vaughan Coveny battles with Sharks midfielder Andrew Packer for the ball.

AIS — off To Italy for an Exclusive Tournament



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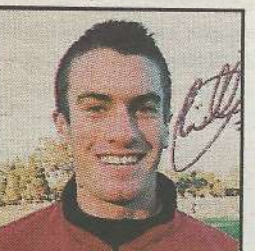
Ben Hughes



Chris Tadrosse



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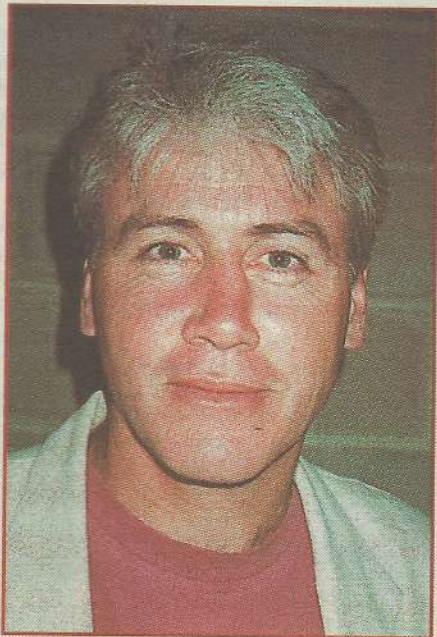


Eli Gilfedder

The AIS has been established in Australia as the best institute in this country.

Having produced quality players such as Mark Viduka, Josip Skoko, Craig Moore, Ned Zelic and John Aloisi, the list of AIS graduates playing overseas is just simply enormous.

Established in 1981, the AIS have been a turning point in the Australian game. For quite some time now, through the good use of facilities at the AIS, many quality players have developed into world-class stars. Tenacious training procedures and top guidance by the best youth coaches in Australia have but improved the players' ability to play the game.



Steve O'Connor Current AIS head coach.

In recent years, various Institutes have been invited to play world youth tournaments.

This year sees the AIS travel to Italy for the highly praised Gradisca tournament held in Trieste in April.

This competition sees giant European, South American and Asian clubs take part in one of the most professional tournaments held throughout the year.

Head coach at the AIS Steve O'Connor ('Rocks'), who's been at the helm for quite some time now is eagerly looking forward to the up and coming tournament for his squad.

Last year's U17 assistant Joey's coach will no doubt have the experience to guide this fairly new and young squad to a top finishing in the highly acclaimed tournament.

"This tournament is a very prestigious event, with good quality international teams. We attended the tournament in 2000, our group comprised of Lazio, River Plate and a Slovenian representative side. We managed to win our group and progressed to the quarterfinals. We haven't made a final decision on the squad for this event, however, it may include some guest players. These players could well come from a few National League sides," said O'Connor.

Competitions like this will prove to be an asset for the squad travelling to Italy as O'Connor explains that it will help them in their future aims as a footballer.

"Many of the AIS players will be our future youth internationals, so exposure to strong international tournaments such as this is important to their development.

Often, a competition such as this is a first time experience for a lot of the players and benefits also include travel skills, (i.e. adjusting to time changes, hydration whilst travelling, passive mind set during long flights).

During the tournament, the application of team skills and tactics, the importance of recovery and mental preparation for games are all-important learning experiences. The players are required to complete a diary which includes pre-match preparation, setting performance goals, post game assessment and time management", said the AIS Head-Coach.

The competitions don't stop there for the AIS, the lucky squad will travel to Ireland in July to take part in the well-known Milk Cup.

The squad is scheduled to leave for Italy at the start of April, results and news on the squad from the tournament will be closely monitored by ABSW.



Nick Stavroulakis



Mark Nedeljkovic



Stuart Musialik



Frank Lagana



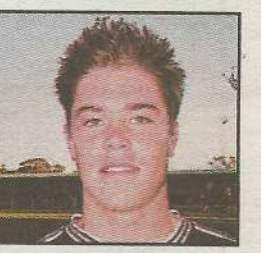
Josh Fluss



Ivan Bosnar



Joel Theissen



Keegan Wolfenden



Mark Milligan



Ray Junna: Assistant AIS coach.

Following is the 2002 AIS Men's Soccer Squad

Adam Federici
Ben Hughes
Anthony Danze
Chris Tadrosse
Joshua Fluss
Jobe Wheelhouse
Liam Lilly
Billy Celevski
Anthony Jankovski
Eli Gilfedder



Anthony Danze: AIS top scorer with 18 goals.

Ivan Bosnar
Nick Stavroulakis
Frankie Lagana
Mark Milligan
Keegan Wolfenden
Stuart Musialik
Joel Theissen
Mark Nedeljkovic
Adam Casey

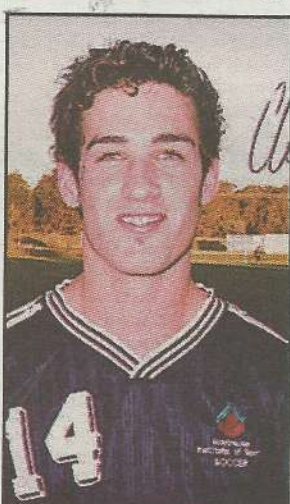
Players Scholarships Ending in April



Ian Waldon



Jonti Richter



Carl Valeri



Matt Anstey

BLACK DAY FOR THE ADELAIDE CITY FORCE



By Allan Crisp

Adelaide City Force last Monday endured the darkest day in its proud history when it lost its entire NSL coaching staff - Zoran Matic, Sergio Melta and Carlo Talladira.

Triple championship winning coach Matic started the dominoes crashing by



Bob D'Ottavi: Adelaide Force chairman running the squad alongside players Vidmar, Veart and Kovacevic.

announcing his resignation to his players before a training session at Ram Park.

A brief single sentence statement including the telling words, "I'm finished," ended a 14-season reign with Adelaide City and brought to a halt the longest serving coaching career (447 games) in Australian soccer. That sequence of shock events followed a meeting that afternoon when Matic told club president Bob D'Ottavi of his intention to resign.

Assistants Melta and Talladira were expected to be appointed as senior coaches for the final four games of the season, but club president Bob D'Ottavi declared his intention of "managing" the team and assuming full selection responsibilities.

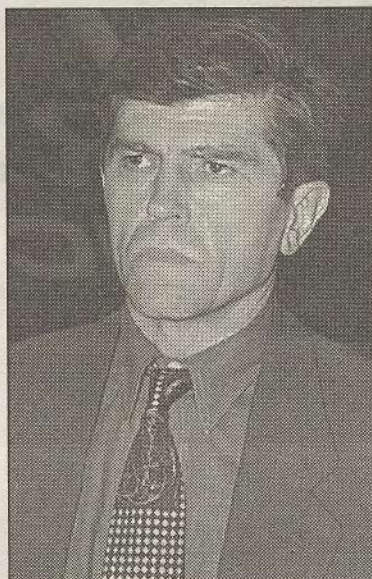
Under that system, the assistants would only be required to be in charge of training sessions, a situation that both coaches found unacceptable.

Former Australian international and record breaking NSL midfielder Melta and Talladira then cut their ties with the club.

On Tuesday, D'Ottavi approached Aurelio Vidmar, offering the former captain the task of coaching the team for the rest of the season, but Vidmar agreed only to oversee training, in company with City's other senior players, Carl Veart and Ante Kovacevic.

It was then agreed that D'Ottavi would manage the squad and would share the coaching and team selection duties with Vidmar, captain Veart and Kovacevic.

Melta, who played 445 NSL games with City, said, "I couldn't accept that arrange-



Zoran Matic: After 14 seasons with the Force, Matic decided it was time to conclude his coaching duties.

ment (put by D'Ottavi). "I have never heard of anything like it before, where you train the players and the chairman coaches them.

"To accept that would have devalued what I have worked hard for as a player and coach," Melta said.

"There is no way that anyone could work under the circumstances that were given to me. When you find out that all that

you have contributed is being questioned by a certain person, you just can't work there.

"You find that your very existence as a soccer person is being questioned. There's no way I'll be back there, unless there is a major turnaround," Melta said.

D'Ottavi said a decision on who would succeed Matic would be made at the end of the season.

Matic, who guided the Force to three NSL championships (1986, 1992, 1994) and two NSL Cup wins (1989, 1992) said he did not regard this season as a failure.

"I got as much as I could out of the players. It's the turn of somebody else now. The truth is we have been sliding for a few years and we haven't been able to do the J-curve."

Matic claimed that one of his reasons for quitting was to prove some of his vocal critics wrong.

"Some people, some of them club members, reckon that our crowds will increase to 10,000 if I go.

"I know that this won't happen, but these people are so stupid that they think that a soccer ball is a water melon.

"I hope that my decision to leave has given everyone a shake-up, not necessarily the players because I think they gave me everything they had, or people in the club. I think it has jolted the people on the periphery.

"I really hope these people now come forward and try to help the club," Matic said.

Matic rated his first championship success in his first season (1986) as his most memorable because the club was struggling financially, yet the team spirit was high.

"But I think we played our most entertaining soccer in 1991 because then we created around 20 scoring chances in every game."

More accustomed to laurels than losses, Adelaide City is this season faced with the grim prospect of finishing last on the NSL ladder for the first time since the inaugural 1977 season. The away clash with the Kiwi Kingz on Friday, March 29 could well decide which club stirs the wooden spoon.



Sergio Melta: Could not accept D'Ottavi's arrangement with managing the Force.

Olympic star Jade North jets off to Germany

By Mark Stavroulakis

Twenty-year-old Sharks star Jade North left Sydney last Wednesday bound for Germany.

The U20 International winger has been scouted by Bundesliga giants Borussia Monchengladbach and has undertaken a 10-day trial.

North, who signed with the Sharks last winter from the Strikers, has had a terrific season to date producing some top-notch performances, which have caught many people's attention.

The Taree born star had hopes prior to his signing at the Sharks, to one-day venture overseas to continue his footballing career.

Monchengladbach currently sit in 13th position are said to be looking for new recruits for next season, Jade might be a possible inclusion to the squad next year. The departure of North has however, come at a tough time as the Sharks prepare for the semi-finals in as many weeks.

Coach Garry Phillips is hoping that North will trial and come straight back to the squad, 100% fit and ready to tackle the Stallions this weekend.

A player known to play anywhere on the park, North is no doubt an asset to the Sharks and with time on his hands, could prove to be the next big player coming out of Australia.

This hasn't been the first time the Sharks have had a player depart for overseas trials.

More recently, explosive winger

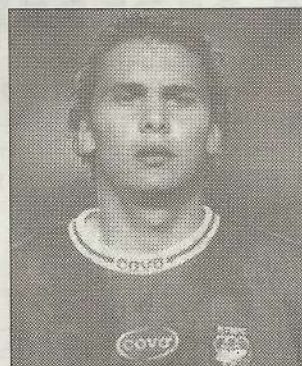


Lindsay Wilson left for overseas trials in Holland with Dutch side PSV Eindhoven. The speedy star impressed the Dutch side so much that he was offered a 5-year-deal with the side, starting up after the current National League season.

Evident from the start of the season, the Sharks possess a number of quality young players, who will surely be looked at, for an overseas venture.

It's come to the attention that this National League season, there has been an increase in players trailing overseas for respective clubs across Europe. Joel Griffiths, Ahmad Elrich, Paul Reid and Leslie Pogliacomi are only a few names this year, that have left their clubs in search of an overseas contract.

It just goes to show the talent this country displays and develops, as currently a number of Australian players are making a name for themselves in leagues across Europe. With so many up and coming stars who have taken part in this year's National League, time will only tell as to how many of them will depart, come start of next National League season.



Jade North: Off to Germany for trials.

Spirit prepared to take action



The Northern Spirit has announced they may sue if South Melbourne grabs a place in the NSL playoffs ahead of them.

General manager Colin Mitchell admitted his club is considering the move after no punishment was dealt out to South for playing Con Boutsianis in its 2-1 win over the Kingz in January.

"If we go out and win all our games, we believe that will be enough to make the top six," Mitchell said. "Our destiny's in our own hands."

"But if we miss out by a point, we would consider all our options. We've got obligations to all of those who put money into the club - the sponsors, supporters and the players."

Boutsianis had been sold to South by the Kingz provided he didn't play in the fixture featuring South Melbourne and the Kingz the following week. South nevertheless changed its mind and played him because it claimed the Kingz had breached confidentiality aspects of the agreement.

Before the match NSL general manager Stefan Kamasz threatened South Melbourne with the loss of any competition points it won in the match if they played Boutsianis. He played anyway

and scored a late winner.

The matter was scheduled to go before the NSL Tribunal with South facing a disrepute charge, but Soccer Australia took it away from the NSL and said no action would be taken because the clubs needed to deal with the matter between themselves.

Since the win South Melbourne has turned a terrible season around and has gone eight matches unbeaten to move to within two points of the sixth-placed Spirit with a match in hand with four rounds remaining.

While both Soccer Australia and Kamasz have refused to make any comment on the matter, Mitchell slammed the way the issue has been dealt with, claiming it should have been settled long ago.

"At the moment, the league is not applying the rule book in certain cases, or applying the rules and not following through in other cases," Mitchell said. "There seems to be a lack of consistency over a number of clubs over a number of issues."



Con Boutsianis: Might cost South Melbourne valuable points come end of season.

Soccer Australia concerned regarding Pay TV changes

Soccer Australia Chairman Ian Knop expressed concern that the recent changes to the pay-television landscape in Australia may result in an adverse effect to the code of soccer in this country.

Current extensive coverage of the National Soccer League on the C7 pay-television network may be in jeopardy, following a decision by Foxtel and Optus Television to share program content.

"The Board of Soccer Australia and I are concerned that the recent announcement by Foxtel and Optus Television may result in the NSL losing its vibrant and substantial

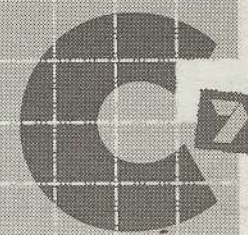
Soccer Australia Chairman Ian Knop.

"Whilst our arrangement with free-to-air broadcaster Channel 7 is not affected, it is extremely important that

popular sports such as soccer have an opportunity to continue to build its national profile, and that the pay-television operators recognise their role in providing this service for the Australian public.

"In November of last year, our sport showed the nation just how popular we can become in this country, and we cannot underestimate the role that a supportive pay-television operator can play in our continued advancement, and other sports facing a similar challenge as soccer."

Soccer Australia is in constant dialogue with its broadcasting partner Channel 7 and will continue to monitor the pay-television situation as more information is released.



ardly, following a decision by Foxtel and Optus Television to share program content.

"The Board of Soccer Australia and I are concerned that the recent announcement by Foxtel and Optus Television may result in the NSL losing its vibrant and substantial coverage on the C7 Sport vision situation as more pay-television network," said

Letters to the Editor

Grand Final Idea Must be Scrapped

Dear Sir,

I am delighted to see that you have featured on your front page, the Glory's triumph as Minor Premiers. I must admit I was a little sceptical that such an achievement would be brushed over by your Sydney correspondents but was pleased to see that your Perth journalist was given the honour of writing an in depth report about such a momentous achievement.

This story covered pretty much every detail about the Perth team and was neatly complimented by the match report in the paper. Your coverage was great and truly paid tribute to the history making Perth Glory.

On a totally different subject, I feel compelled to voice my opinion about the structure of the NSL, where there is both a Minor Premiership and Grand Final champion. I have not seen such a competition run in any of the elite leagues around the world.

Rather the champion of that particular country is crowned after the completion of the round matches. I would very much like to see this as being the norm in the Australian competition as I feel the idea of a grand final winner takes away from the true champion who has been the more consistent team throughout the entire season.

M. Collins,
Kalgoorlie, WA.

Editor's Note: ABSW is an Australian publication, therefore, what ever issue that seems to arise in Australian soccer today, we cover.

Richard Kreider has been an ABSW correspondent from Perth for quite some time now, and has written many great articles in the past, especially on current issues surfacing in Perth. It was only just, that he was to cover the Perth angle on their minor premiership win.

In response to your opinion on



Ian Knop: Has come under fire with the finals system.

an NSL restructure, the reasons for the National League adapting a Grand-Final system is due to crowd increases. Unfortunately, the National League itself hasn't been stringing the crowds in, with the Grand-Final system, crowds seem to rise which can only be good for the game.

Soccer Australia – Take Note of Freddie Shepherd's Views

Dear Sir,

I read in this weeks issue the visit of Newcastle United boss Freddie Shepherd to Australia to begin talks with various National League clubs, with the prospect of support/ownership of these various clubs.

He raised some interesting points about the state of the game in particular that the game down under had a pulse but needed reviving. He suggested that the NSL should be divorced from that of Soccer Australia in a model similar to that in England with the FA and Premier League as two separate entities. Such a model removes the internal and external politics affecting the administration of the game, leaving the game of soccer devoid of the problems that are rife in the current state of the game in Australia.

As two separate entities, the interests of each could be looked after with the upmost care and done in such a way that the interests of that particular body are fully catered for. Unfortunately in its current state, the interest of two organisations are being juggled to create a compromise that ultimately neglects the true interests of each body.

Soccer Australia are concerned with the lack of revenue being generated within Australian soccer and as a result are siphoning the successes of the National League and the various State competitions that is destroying the playing nature of the sport. Soccer as a game is choking under the politics of a stricken body and have been for a number of years.

Only when John Constantine was in charge of the ASF was a harmony reached that helped soccer in this state grow. However when off-field problems affected the governing body, it filtered through to soccer itself.

So, Soccer Australia take heed to what Freddie



Freddie Shepherd: Newcastle United (England) Chairman believes the NSL should divorce with Soccer Australia.

Shepherd said must be improved for the game to survive in this country. Concentrate on what your interest are and do not pretend to have the interests of soccer players in this country at heart because what they want is far different to what you want.

Editor's Note: The over all solution to the current problem surfacing the game in Australia is the internal conflicts happening amongst the hierarchy of the game. If Soccer Australia, and all other Federations join as one, help each other out for the good of the game, then we will defiantly see a rise in the game. Freddie Shepherd brought up some good points about furthering the popularity of the game in Australia, no doubt something worth looking into.

R.Naylor,
Highfields, NSW.

Dear Sir,

In my letter "Gladesville Hornsby Assoc. on Way Up," ABSW, March 12, the printers gremlins managed to remove part of a sentence, thus giving the impression that David Lee "undistinguished himself" as president of Soccer Far North Coast, based in Lismore.

While we would be honoured to have David as our President, the real life situation is that Michael

CORRECTION

Gaertner is our worthy President. To set the record straight, could you reprint the last paragraph, which read:

One a more happy note, it is worth mentioning that a Gladesville Hornsby Association area resident, David Lee, former NSW State director of coaching and now chief of the winning Edge Football Academy, discovered and coached

Harry Kewell and Brett Emerton when, as the *Daily Telegraph* reported last year, "they were in soccer diapers."

Also, undistinguished GHA player Michael Gaertner, is now distinguishing himself as President of Soccer Far North Coast with nearly 6000 players. In a round-about way does that makes up for GHA shortcomings?

George Green, Wollongbar,
North Coast, NSW.

QSF Right in Rejecting Soccer Australia Levy's

Dear Sir,

I feel obliged to voice my opinion regarding the stance that the Queensland Soccer Federation has taken in rejecting the proposal of Soccer Australia to increase the National Registration Fee (NRF).

I believe that the QSF are more than justified in their decision to support their amateur players and on their behalf stop an increase of \$4 on their registration. SA chairman Ian Knop claims that the increase to the NRF is to help fund youth programs throughout Australia and to ensure that a closer relationship is established between the grassroots and the higher governing bodies.

If this is the case as Mr Knop claims then why were such programs implemented only after the well-publicised financial collapse of SA and the failure of the Socceroos to qualify for this year's World Cup.

Mr Knop and his executive body came into office well before November of last year yet failed to undertake any significant youth programming and funding that he so desperately feels is necessary at this current time.

Likewise Mr Knop felt it neces-

sary only to improve relations across the soccer community after the prospect of several millions of dollars fell through and were therefore not able to pay off their debts.



The QSF has not been fooled into believing that their money is going to help youth soccer players. They are well aware that the increased revenue will be used directly into bailing out the governing body and because of this have rejected it.

The moves taken by the Queensland Federation, I wholeheartedly support. They recognise that their amateurs are the lifeblood of the game and play the sport

because of their pure passion and enjoyment of it.

It is unjust that they are forced into the politics of this game when the likes of those being slugged with the added fee are not even old enough to understand the financial situation of the governing body.

Such an increase will leave a bad taste in the mouths of their parents who will undoubtedly drive the juniors to their playing venues while the juniors themselves will be playing under a cloud of false impressions and make-believe designs of the game.

M. Zen,
Townsville, QLD.

Editor's Note: At this current stage, Soccer Australia's only solution to their economic problem are the levy's. Some people will no doubt not agree with them, however it would be beneficial to support one action carried out by the governing body.

People will have their differences from various Federations across Australia, what we have to try and do here in Australia is amalgamate as one.

Women's Soccer Coverage

Dear Sir,

I am writing in regards to the coverage on the Women's section in the ABSW. I have been a fond admirer of Janene Mar and her help in promoting the Women's game.

I am very pleased to see that the publication has continued to support the code in Australia, especially through the success of the Matildas.

I hope that this section can be kept for good and not thrown away as I know the Women's game is on the rise, especially in Australia.

S. Hollows,
Birrongo, NSW.

Editor's Note: The women's game will always have a place in Australian soccer, and as a soccer publication, promoting women to play the sport is beneficial to the codes survival. The talent the Australian women's soccer team posses is unbelievable, and through time, we might see a World Cup win heading our way.

Big Thank You

Dear Sir,

I am Writing to you to say a Big Thank You in regards to the interview you did on Leichhardt Tigers player Joe Bruni (January 13, 2002).

It's nice to see not only NSL players but NSW Premier League players are also getting recognised for their efforts and talents of soccer on and off the playing field.

Ms Raco you have made a fan quite

happy with your recent interview with Joe Bruni.

Once again Thank You.

Keep up the excellent work you and your co-workers are doing on *The Australian and British Soccer Weekly*.

Domenica Mesiti,
Wetherill Park, NSW.



OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

TRAUMATIC TREND CONTINUES AT FORCE



South Australian soccer in general and Adelaide City Force in particular have been

rocked by the incredible happenings last week at Ram Park.

As reported elsewhere in this edition, Australian household soccer names, Zoran Matic, Sergio Melta and Carlo Talladira are no longer coaching at the club.

Of the trio who walked away from their jobs, only senior coach Matic did so without public acrimony.

Each of the people concerned is a former Adelaide City player and each holds a special place within the history of the great club.

Matic and Melta are icons of the game with the latter, unfortunately joining a grow-

He sold his hairdressing business last year to concentrate on his role as assistant NSL coach.

During his outstanding playing career with City, Melta, played under coaches Edmund Kreft, Rale Rasic, Les Scheinflug, D'Ottavi, Bobby Ferguson, a second stint under Kreft, Matic and Perin, before Matic returned.

Melta won the NSL Player of the Year award in 1984, two seasons before he was integral part of Adelaide City's first championship win.

Perin said yesterday that he was completely in shock over the manner in which Melta had been treated.

"Serg Melta has probably been the greatest player Adelaide City has ever had and I



Branko Milosevic: Will guide Olympic FC in the South Australian Premier League.

think it's a disgrace," Perin said.

"I have no more sympathy for the club, if that's the way they treat their former champions."

Perin believes that problems have been brewing at the club for around six years.

"There are some people within the club, who are undermining the whole set-up and until these people leave, the club will continue to go backwards," a concerned Perin said.

KARADZIC THE KING OF COACHES

South Australia's Centenary Soccer Season 2002 began last Friday night with eight of the 12 Premier League clubs keeping faith with the coaches who guided them last season.

Zoran Karadzic has swept into his ninth season as Blue Eagles coach with five championship scalps on his belt.

The Blues have a reputation for stability, having just five senior coaches since 1983 Frank Schaper, Joe Serafini, Mario Danielli, Jan Kierno and Karadzic.

Adelaide City Zebras have retained former NSL defender Neville Flounders, while newly promoted Adelaide Galaxy have Milan Ivanovic succeeding Zoran Maricic in their major coaching position.

Former Socceroo Ivanovic started his new role by retaining the SA Summer Night Series trophy, won in its inaugural season by the Galaxy team, known then as Birkalla.

Ivanovic surprised many by registering as a player, but those who are aware of his fitness regime know that he is more than capable of leading from example on the field whenever the need arises.

Branko Milosevic will again guide the fortunes of Olympic FC, while Jan Kierno will be hoping to repeat or better the fourth position he gained with Campbelltown City last season.

Mario Boffa lines up for his fourth season as coach of the fledgling North Eastern Metro Stars with the unique record of being the only man who has held the position.

Duane Gray is looking to go one better

than the losing Grand Final his Modbury Jets accomplished last season, but it will depend largely on how his new recruits fit into the positions vacated by the stars who joined other clubs.

Alby Kidd returns to Playford Patriots boosted by last seasons Federation Cup win, but anxious to improve on the seventh league placing of season 2001.

Rocky Aloisi has swapped from Raiders to keen rivals White City Woodville, while new chum Michael Petrillo takes over at Raiders, who have recruited magnificently.

Another new Premier League coach Frank Pasquini is the boss of the Pirates, who are fielding the youngest team in the competition.

Former West Adelaide Sharks captain Greg Mills took Para Hills Knights out of the State League and into the Premier League where he will parade an impressive array of new signings.

THE COACHES PREMIER LEAGUE

Blue Eagles: Zoran Karadzic. **Adelaide City Zebras:** Neville Flounders. **Adelaide Galaxy:** Milan Ivanovic. **Olympic FC:** Branko Milosevic. **Campbelltown Red Devils:** Jan Kierno. **Modbury Jets:** Duane Gray. **Metro Stars:** Mario Boffa. **Para Hills:** Greg Mills. **Playford Patriots:** Alby Kidd. **Pirates:** Frank Pasquini. **Raiders:** Michael Petrillo. **White City Woodville:** Rocky Aloisi.

STATE LEAGUE

Cobras: Nick Pantaras. **Hills Hawks:** Rob Thornton. **Croydon Kings:** Ernie Luongo. **Cumberland Foxes:** Richard Preston. **Enfield Falcons:** Robbie DiTroia. **Noarlunga Bulldogs:** David Leane. **Northern Demons:** Philip Amato. **Panthers:** Peter Rideout. **Port Pirie City:** John Caputo. **Salisbury United:** Paul McKenna. **Seaford Surfers:** Lemmy Vatsilas. **Western Strikers:** Mario Corti.

PREMIER LEAGUE COMINGS AND GOINGS

Blue Eagles: IN: J. Perin, M. Pirone (Croydon Kings). OUT: C. Senesi (Campbelltown), J. Hilditch, M. Capasso (Enfield), M. Bonnet (Metro Stars), J. Manzarapis (Olympic).
Last season: Premier. Captain: Joe Cutillo.

Adelaide City Zebras: IN: A. Carter (Modbury), M. Downie (Richmond, Vic). OUT: S. Thompson (Galaxy), D. Widera (Croydon), R. D'Andrea (Metro Stars), S. Widera (Raiders), D. Moczurad, S. Blefari (Western Strikers), D. Hercegovac (White City).
Last season: 5th. Captain: Robbie Sareceno.

Adelaide Galaxy: IN: P. Hoey (Croydon), P. Karittevlis (Raiders), B. Moore (Metro Stars), J. Buhagiar (Eastern Pride), S. Thompson (Adelaide City). OUT: D. Lukin, J. Torresan (Enfield), P. Paris (Noarlunga), K. Wilkinson (Para Hills), G. Clarke (Pirates), J. Fusco (Raiders), M. Packer (White City).
Last season: State League premier. Captain: Paul Pezos.

Olympic FC: IN: K. Tosh (Croydon), G. Tsonis (Pirates), J. Mantzarapis (Blue Eagles), G. Dimopoulos (Western Strikers). OUT: J. Katianos (Olympic), C. Bagnara, T. Tsiounis (Western Strikers).
Last season: 9th. Captain: Kosta Metaxiotis.

Campbelltown Red Devils: IN: P.

Varicchio, L. Parry, J. Stavrides (Croydon), R. Calabria, J. Calabria (Pirates), S. DeGiovanniello (Metro Stars), C. Senesi (Blue Eagles).

OUT: D. Menechella (Metro Stars), J. Trimboli, P. Beltrame (Para Hills), A. Perre, M. Staltari (Playford), D. Menechella (Raiders), M. Menechella (White City).
Last season: 4th. Captain: Lachlan Campbell.

Modbury Jets: IN: T. Nelson (Port Pirie).

OUT: A. Carter (Adelaide Zebras), R. Nash (Enfield), M. Yates, C. Marwe (Para Hills).

Last Season: 2nd. Captain: Duane Dobson.

Metro Stars: IN: P. Kourkoulis (Cumberland), B. Smith (Canberra Cosmos), B. Misailidis, Kon Antoniou (Pirates), D. Menechella (Campbelltown), M. Bonnet (Blue Eagles), R. D'Andrea (Adelaide Zebras), L. Lucchesi (Croydon). OUT: B. Moore (Galaxy), S. DeGiovanniello (Campbelltown), R. Arruzzulo (Salisbury).
Last season: 3rd. Captain: Daniel Sabatino.

Para Hills Knights: IN: M. Yates, C. Marwe (Modbury), J. Trimboli, P. Beltrame (Campbelltown), M. Henry (Playford), K. Wilkinson (Galaxy). OUT: R. Greenwood, R. Lara, F. Lara (Cobras), S. Plummer, M. Woods (Croydon), D. Steele, M. Mulady (Enfield), M. Talbot (Pirates), D. Kljajic (White City).
Last season: 2nd State League. Captain: Mark Yates.

Playford Patriots: IN: C. Georgiou, G. Haralbakis (Raiders), A. Perre, M. Staltari (Campbelltown), G. Joy (Salisbury). OUT: Z. Matikulas (Croydon), M. Henry (Para Hills), L. McCracken (Salisbury).
Last season: 7th. Captain: Andy Thompson.

Pirates: IN: M. Villos (Cumberland), J. Blefari (Raiders), G. Clarke (Galaxy), M. Talbot (Para Hills). OUT: R. Calabria, J. Calabria (Campbelltown), B. Misailidis, K. Antoniou (Metro Stars), C. Alagich (Nth Demons), C. Tsonis (Olympic), M. Paleka (Raiders).
Last season: 10th. Captain: Joe Lagana.

Raiders: IN: S. Barbaro, E. Scalzi (Croydon), M. Paleka (Pirates), S. Widera (Adelaide Zebras), D. Menechella (Campbelltown), J. Fusco (Galaxy). OUT: P. Karittevlis (Galaxy), B. Dujmovic, F. Clemente (Croydon), J. Blefari (Pirates), C. Georgiou, G. Haralbakis (Playford).
Last season: 8th. Captain: Billy Karapetis.

White City Woodville: IN: D. Kljajic (Para Hills), J. Tassone, A. Perrotta (Western Strikers), M. Menechella (Campbelltown), D. Hercegovac (Adelaide Zebras), M. Packer (Galaxy). OUT: None.
Last season: 6th. Captain: Bradley Armour.

SA AMATEUR LEAGUE
Bosa 3, Salisbury Villa 0; Salisbury Inter 3, USC Lion 3

ROUND 6
Wednesday, March 20 at John Hart Reserve
Eastside Jets v Elizabeth Vale; The Cove v Fulham United.

PREMIER LEAGUE
ROUND 1
Adelaide Galaxy 6 (Hagias 4, Westervelt, Karittevlis) Adelaide Zebras 0. Best Galaxy: Hagias, Westervelt.



Mark Yates: The tough defender has signed for Para Hills Knights.

Karittevlis; Zebras: Bearzotti, Bucco, D. Scarsella.

Campbelltown Red Devils 0, Metro Stars 1 (Simmons). Best Campbelltown: Allen, Savio, Udagawa; Metro Stars: D. Menechella, Sen D'Arcie.

Raiders 3 (S. Widera 2, Paleka) **Pirates 0.** Best Raiders: Widera, Menechella, Cerrachio; Pirates: Puyenboak, Koufalis, Manka.

Playford Patriots 2 (Pearce, Georgiou) **Blue Eagles 2.** (Pirone, Brooks). Best Playford: Thompson, Miller, Pearce; Blue Eagles: Zito, Kierno, Deleso.

White City 2 (Armour, Zinic) **Olympic FC 4** (Galanopoulos, Pappas, Abanese, Parrisos). Best White City: Beltrame, Armour, Benardino; Olympic: Tsonis, Pappas, Parrisos.

Para Hills Knights 1 (P. Jones) **Modbury Jets 0.** Best Para-Hills: Henry, Marwe, M. Moore; Modbury Jets: Dobson, Nelson, Harris.

STATE LEAGUE ROUND 1

Noarlunga Bulldogs 7 (Vette 2, P. Paris 2, Forster 2, McArdle) **Seaford Surfers 1** (Green). Best Noarlunga: P. Paris, Foy, Vette; Seaford: Samardzija, Lenartowicz, Honeyman.

Croydon Kings 1 (S. Pirone) **Cumberland Foxes 0.** Best Croydon Kings: Donovan, M. Woods, Musolino; Cumberland: Mitchell, Donk, Paterson.

Northern Demons 5 (Ainsworth 2, Salvemini 2, Bellefemini) **Enfield Falcons 3** (Mulady, Steele, Richichi). Best Demons: C. Alagich, Ainsworth, Salvemini.

Western Strikers 4 (McNeil 2, D. Paris, Tsounis) **Port Pirie City 2** (Decelis, Ledington). Best Strikers: F. Barbaro, Tsounis, McNeil; Port Pirie City: Decelis, Dawson, Beize.

Hills Hawks 1 (Coombs) **Cobras 0.** Best Hawks: Keegan-Thrun, Dunt; Cobras: Bilandzic, Harpas, Skoumbros.

Panthers 1 (Murphy) **Salisbury United 5**

ABSWs SA correspondent, Allan Crisp, soccer promoter, Angelo Picca, West Beach coach Peter Millar and SBS "On The Ball" anchorman, Kyle Patterson can be heard on the 1197 AM RPH Adelaide Marshall Thompson/Pacific Real Estate Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7am-9am.

Former Australian international and Adelaide City coach, John Perin and The Advertiser soccer writer Meno Toutsidis, join Crisp for the 1197 AM RPH SOS (Soccer on Sunday) program from 8.30am-9.30am, when the latest NSL, overseas and local soccer scores are aired along with fast breaking news, views and interviews.



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Premier League Wrap-Ups By GLENN DAVIS

Old enemies Queensland Lions and Brisbane City remained the only sides with maximum points from the opening two rounds of the Brisbane premier league after contrasting wins last weekend.

While Brisbane City had too much class winning 3-1 away in the cool of Saturday night against Toowoomba, a farcical situation arose on Sunday when Queensland Lions battled hard in oppressive heat to overcome spirited 10-man Taringa Rovers at Lions Stadium.

Brisbane City went to the top of the table on goal difference over Lions after three second half goals from Pablo Arvilles, Damien Waugh and Mathaus Schneider while Toowoomba's only reply came from Peter Lucey.

Brisbane City coach Frank Pimblett was less than happy after a scoreless first half but was proud of his side's second half comeback.

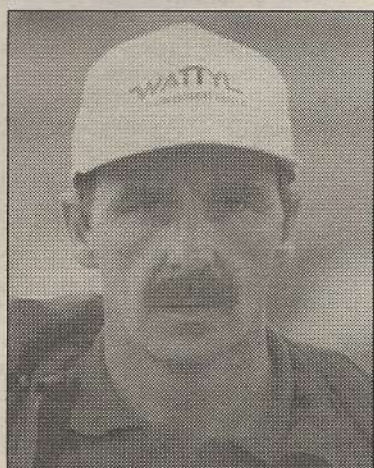
"Toowoomba are a big side who make it difficult for sides to break them down," Pimblett said.

"You've got to be clever against them and we weren't until the second half."



Brad Ditton: Queensland Lions player who set up the Lions only goal.

Coach Miron Bleiberg blamed the heat for a less than impressive showing from Queensland Lions who grabbed the only goal of the game just before half time when Matt Olley headed home a Brad Ditton cross.



Frank Pimblett: Brisbane City coach happy about his sides 3-1 win over the Queensland Lions.

"It was extremely hot and it proved a leveller for Taringa," Bleiberg said.

"Taringa gave us a run for our money and had plenty of determination".

"Darryl Hathway had one chance for Taringa to score but we missed four or five chances."

Taringa suffered two serious setbacks in the grudge match when midfielder Chris Dodds was sent off ten minutes into the second half for his second bookable offence.

Dodds picked up his two cautions after being on the park only five minutes when he replaced Shaun Molenda who was stretched off with a serious knee injury and is expected to miss the remainder of the season.

"Any neutral person at the ground will tell you we deserved a draw," said Taringa coach John Ogden.

"We had the better of the chances in the first half and looked more dangerous than Lions".

"They couldn't score and had to rely on a dead ball situation for Olley who headed home."

Easts also remain unbeaten with two draws after the first two rounds following a 1-all draw with Rochedale.

Easts coach, former Socceroo stalwart Col Bennett, believed his young side were unlucky not to down Toowoomba in the opening round and on chances, should easily have accounted for Rochedale.

Mackay striker Anthony Kidd put Easts ahead with bullet-like drive from 25 metres in the 20th minute before Korean striker Kwang Moo Huh cancelled out the goal drilling a free-kick off the upright 12 minutes later.

"We should have won the game on the number of chances we had," Bennett said.

"Rochedale are supposed to be one of the top four clubs so overall I'm pleased with the way we've started although we probably should have won both games."

Bennett predicted Kidd is set for a sensational year in the premier league and expects big things from him and fellow striker Shane Coffey.

"Shane was the rookie of the year last season and had about four chances to score against Rochedale," Bennett said.

"We've got no super stars but I think Coffey and Kidd are going to score a stack of goals this year."

"If you take out Lions and perhaps the Gold Coast you could throw a blanket over the rest of the sides it,s that even."

New Mt. Gravatt coach Jarrod Austin continued to have a tough initiation to premier league ranks after Ipswich Knights thumped his side 6-nil.

A hat-trick from striker Stu Hinks led the way for the Knights, who this season

is being coached by Andy Ogden after Frank Pimblett departed for Brisbane City.

Austin believes Mt Gravatt, who survived relegation by one goal last season, have the makings of a good sided but are lacking heart.

Mt. Gravatt, who lost 2-nil to North Star in the first round, trailed 2-nil at half time and went three down when veteran keeper Graham Ross was sent

dropped for the Ipswich clash while Brayshaw has played the first two games with rib cartilage damage and may be rested for their next game.

Knights, coach Andy Ogden was delighted with the result, which left the club in third place with four points from a possible six in the opening two rounds.

"Mt Gravatt kept the ball well but they didn't penetrate. I don't think our keeper Adrian Walker had to make one



Miron Bleiberg: Queensland Lions coach blamed the heat for a less than impressive showing from his team.

off for an incident in back play.

"It hasn't been a good start to the season but technically we've got some good players but they're lacking some heart at the moment and the will to win," Austin said.

Austin has the majority of last season's squad including experienced Alan MacFarlane and Andy Brayshaw and the recently acquired Darren Hillier.

Austin said Hillier has been behind in his fitness level this season and was

save the whole game," Ogden said.

After Hinks piled on the first three goals, the Knights, other goals came from Stu Drinkeld, Wayne Adams and Trent Griffiths.

In other matches Gold Coast moved to fourth thrashing North Star 4-1 with Russell Miner bagging a double while striker Jacob Noe also netted two to help steer Wynnum to a 3-nil win over The Gap.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Round 2

	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts
Brisbane City	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Queensland Lions	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
IPSW Knights	2	1	0	1	8	2	4
Gold Coast City	2	1	0	1	5	1	4
Wynnum	2	1	1	0	2	3	3
North Star	2	1	1	0	2	4	3
Rochedale Rovers	2	0	0	2	3	3	2
Eastern Suburbs	2	0	0	2	1	1	2
Taringa Rovers	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
T'wmba Raiders	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
The Gap	2	0	2	0	0	4	0
Mt Gravatt	2	0	2	0	0	8	0

Results for Round 2

Queensland Lions	1	Taringa Rovers	0
IPSW Knights	6	Mt Gravatt	0
Brisbane City	3	T'wmba Raiders	1
Gold Coast City	4	North Star	0
Rochedale Rov	1	Eastern Suburbs	1
Wynnum	1	The Gap	0

FIRST DIVISION

Round 3

	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts
Souths Utd	3	3	0	0	17	0	9
Bundaberg Waves	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Pine Rivers Utd	3	2	0	1	5	1	7
Inala City	3	2	1	0	6	2	6
Capalaba	3	1	1	1	8	3	4
Redlands Utd	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Mitchelton	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Albany Creek	3	1	1	1	4	9	4
Newmarket	3	1	2	0	4	5	3
Uni of Qld	3	0	1	2	1	5	2
Slacks Creek	3	0	2	1	2	7	1
Brisbane Olympic Uni	2	0	1	1	2	7	1
Grange Thistle	3	0	2	1	2	7	1
Rocklea Utd	2	0	2	0	2	9	0

Results for Round 3

Albany Creek	3	Slacks Creek	0
Bundaberg Waves	2	Redlands Utd	0
Newmarket	3	Grange Thistle	1
South Utd	4	Uni of Qld	0
Capalaba	0	Pine Rivers Utd	0
Inala City	3	Mitchelton	0

Brisbane Olympic Uni v Rocklea Utd - NR

WEEKEND FIRST GRADE FIXTURES

◆ ROUND 3 ◆

Friday 22nd March
Taringa Rovers vs The Gap 7.30pm

Saturday 23rd March
North Star vs Queensland Lions 7.00pm
Wynnum T'wmba Raiders 7.00pm

Sunday 24th March
Brisbane City vs Rochedale Rovers 3.00pm
Eastern Suburbs vs Mt Gravatt 7.00pm
IPSW Knights vs Gold Coast City 3.00pm

NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER LEAGUE

www.nswpremierleague.com



FEATURE MATCH

C'bury M'ville Olympic VS St George Saints

KICK-OFF: 7pm & 5pm, Saturday 23 March 2002

VENUE: Henson Park, Sydenham Rd/Centennial St, Marrickville

While neither of these two sides will be involved in the post season, the match shapes up as being quite a lively encounter.

The Berries made a run for the Top Five midway through the season but four successive losses to the likes of the Coasties, Belconnen, Parramatta and Fairfield saw their push fall short of the mark.

They still have one of the best attacking midfields in the league with the likes of Con Paradisis, Yane Talceviski and Anthony Doumanis and with Aheleas Kotsopoulos up front they have the cattle to play very entertaining football.

"Those four losses were very disappointing," said skipper Greg Collins, "because up till then we were a chance and we were playing some good football."

There are no major injury problems in the camp though the Berries have lost former Liberian International Andy Amegashie to the Adelaide Galaxy.

"We've got games against Bonnyrigg and Bankstown after the Saints, but here no pressure on us. So we will be looking to win as many as possible, disrupt a few Top Five sides and finish the season on a positive note," said Collins.

St. George staged a remarkable turnaround last weekend. Coming off an 8-1 drubbing at the hands of Blacktown City a week earlier, the Saints turned it all around and beat the Sharks in the local derby 4-0. Star of the show was undoubtedly veteran utility Evangelos Petratos who led from the front with three well taken goals, proving there is still life in the old legs.

However, Petratos is certain to find himself relegated to the defence again with the return of Bruno Beddoni

from injury who was out of the Sharks game with suspension. Beddoni has also been a revelation for the Saints scoring 9 goals in 7 games and his contribution against the Berries will go a long way to deciding the outcome.

"Bruno has been a tremendous acquisition for us," said coach Manny Spanoudakis. "Many pundits thought Bruno was washed up two years ago but he has fought his way back and has shown to everyone what a class act he really is. Its a credit to the guy for his perseverance and his energy."

The Saints face the Central Coast and Belconnen in their remaining matches and on form they are a good chance of finishing the season unbeaten.

Round Nine Result: St George 1 (Permall) Olympic 1 (Paradisis)



Andy Amegashie has transferred on loan from Canterbury Marrickville to Adelaide Galaxy in South Australia.

Canterbury Marrickville Olympic is proudly sponsored by Olympic Airways and Meraklis Tailors

PREMIER LEAGUE

ROUND 20

Saturday March 23

1st Grade U19

C'bury-M'ville	v	St George	Henson Park	7:00pm	5:00pm
Belconnen BD	v	Fairfield Bulls	Hawker Oval	5:00pm	3:00pm
Central Coast	v	Leichhardt Tigers	Plum Park	7:00pm	5:00pm
S'land Sharks	v	Bonnyrigg WE	Seymour Shaw	7:00pm	5:00pm
Blacktown City	v	Bankstown City	Gabbie Stadium	7:00pm	5:00pm

Sunday March 24

1st Grade U19

P'matta Eagles	v	Penrith Panthers	Melita Stadium	6:30pm	4:30pm
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ROUND 21

Saturday March 30

1st Grade U19

St George	v	Central Coast	St George Std	7:00pm	5:00pm
Fairfield Bulls	v	P'matta Eagles	Nineveh Field	7:00pm	5:00pm
Bonnyrigg WE	v	C'bury-M'ville	Serbian Centre	7:00pm	5:00pm
Bankstown City	v	S'land Sharks	Jensen Park	7:00pm	5:00pm
Blacktown City	v	Penrith Panthers	Gabbie Stadium	7:00pm	5:00pm

Sunday March 31

1st Grade U19

Leichhardt Tigers	v	Belconnen BD	Lambert Park	5:00pm	3:00pm
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The Cafe La Scala Player of the Week after Round 19 of the NSW Premier League is:

Cafe La Scala

JIM NIKAS
Blacktown City Demons

Cafe La Scala is located at Shop 32, Piazza Level, Italian Forum, 23 Norton St, Leichhardt - Phone: (02) 9572 8577



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- Parramatta Eagles in FocusP18
- Scoreboard & Picture GalleryP19



NSW Premier League



PREVIEW ROUND TWENTY

Tale of two Cities at Gabbie Stadium



Belconnen Blue Devils VS Fairfield Bulls



KICK-OFF: 5pm & 3pm, Saturday 23 March 2002
VENUE: Hawker Oval, Walhallow Road, Hawker (ACT)

A tough game to pick with two of the Premier League's Top Five contenders shaping up for a battle royale.

Belconnen's loss last week has them one competition point behind, but they know a win will see them leapfrog the Bulls back into the relative safety of the Top Five.

The Blue Devils have Leichhardt (a) and St. George (h) in the final two rounds so they will need a full nine points to make sure they are amongst the contenders.

Fairfield have won their past four and face Parramatta Eagles (h) and Penrith (a) in their final two encounters, marking this match a mini Grand Final.

Round Nine result: Fairfield Bulls 2 (Connolly x2) Belconnen Blue Devils 2 (Camara, Lazzari)



Belconnen ace, Stewart Camara.

Belconnen Blue Devils are proudly sponsored by Belconnen Soccer Club, Uhlsport, Mcguigan Wines, bestvalueIT.com, Pacific Painting, Sharp Direct



Central Coast Coasties VS Leichhardt Tigers



KICK-OFF: 7pm & 5pm, Saturday 23 March 2002
VENUE: Pluim Park, Tuggerah St, Lisarow (Central Coast)

The Coasties haven't won a game since February the 16th and on recent form its hard to see them troubling one of the competition's leading lights.

But stranger things have happened and with a side chock-full of youth the Central Coast will not lie down. The Tigers are still in line for a top three spot if they are good enough.

After their trip to Pluim Park they face two crunch games against Belconnen (h) and Parramatta Eagles (a), so they must make sure they take the full three points this week.

Round Nine Result: Leichhardt Tigers 4 (Karavatakis x2, Poimer, La Rocca) Central Coast 0



Leichhardt's tyro, Ryan Jones.

Central Coast Coasties are proudly sponsored by the Central Coast Leagues Club



Parramatta Eagles VS Penrith Panthers



KICK-OFF: 6.30pm & 4.30pm, Sunday 24 March 2002
VENUE: Melita Stadium, Everley Rd, South Granville

One of the form teams of the competition against one of the strugglers should see the home side emerge with the points. Or will it?

Penrith are not a side to be taken lightly and have caused more than a few heartaches for teams who take them too lightly.

The Eagles remain three points in front of the second place side Bonnyrigg and are in the box seat as far as the title is concerned.

But with games coming up against Fairfield Bulls (a) and Leichhardt Tigers (h) they must make sure they take the three points and a good margin away from this game to keep their noses in front.

Round Nine Result: Penrith Panthers 1 (Hutchinson) Parramatta Eagles 2 (Bakis, Dwyer)



Parramatta Eagles' Paul O'Grady.

Parramatta Eagles are proudly sponsored by Parramatta Leagues Club & Bank of Valletta



Blacktown City Demons VS Bankstown City Lions



KICK-OFF: 7pm & 5pm, Saturday 23 March 2002
VENUE: Gabbie Stadium, Quinn Ave, Seven Hills

A ten game unbeaten run sees Blacktown come into this game as the overwhelming favourites.

Since their mid season wake-up call the Demons have been a different side and another Grand Final looks well within their reach, providing they can get past the next three games.

Penrith and Sutherland are their next two opponents giving them a reasonably easy passage to the post season while Bankstown must win every one of their next three games and hope results go their way if they are to reach fifth spot.

The Lions have Sutherland and Canterbury so nine points is achievable which sets this game up as a Grand Final for them.

Round Nine Result: Blacktown City 3 (Imaya, Riches, Rastall) Bankstown City 4 (Trposki x2, Luff x2)



Anthony Kanaan of Bankstown City Lions.

Blacktown City Demons are proudly sponsored by Perfection Milk, West Ham United Football Club, Cadbury-Schweppes, Wonderland Travel, Independent Gaming Systems



NSW Premier League



FROM THE SIDELINES *with Greg Stock and Paul Goodwin*

"Cobbler to the Stars" Ian Gillan is back at it again. Fresh from putting the winning touches to Archie Markopoulos boots a few weeks ago, Gillan has been inundated with players wanting him to tidy up their boots with his winning formula.

Latest to make an impression is Parramatta Eagles midfielder Geoff Dwyer. Dwyer had his boots at the Chatswood shop a week before the game against Sutherland in Round Sixteen, and low and behold he bobbed up with a well taken goal in the sides 6-0 win over the Sharks at Seymour Shaw Park.

"It's been a bit weird," said Gillan, who is also on the Eagles coaching staff. "I'm just a simple cobbler, and there is no voodoo associated with my trade, just a lot of hard work." We do not believe that for a second folks!

◆◆◆◆
Bonnyrigg striker Jimmy Aschner has returned to the scorers chart in a big way!

Four goals in two weeks against St. George and Penrith has seen the former Sutherland and Blacktown City forward stake a claim for this season's Golden Boot, and on form you'd have to say he is one of favourites for the title.

Aschner's other day job is that of an actor and while a lot of referees have argued that they have seen his acting skills at close quarters, Premier League fans should keep an eye

out for him in the "Don't be a Tosser" campaign!

◆◆◆◆
St. George and Sutherland have revived the "St. George-



Fairfield's Nick Bosevski is likely to power the Bulls to a Top Five finish.

Sutherland Shire Trophy", which saw the two sides square off last Saturday afternoon at the unlikely venue of Jubilee Oval in Kogarah.

It was the first time Premier League football had been seen at the venue and after seeing the game, we do hope it's definitely not the last. While the roll up was quite good, the central location of the venue and its first-class facilities makes it a very tough ground to beat. Well done St. George!

◆◆◆◆
Those pundits that wrote off the Fairfield Bulls a few weeks ago are starting to look like they will have egg on their faces.

After a couple of losses

against Bankstown City and Blacktown City, the Bulls looked anything but Top Five material, but wins against Sutherland, Bonnyrigg and Canterbury have seen the club come storming back into contention.

The acquisition of Nick Bosevski has been a masterstroke with the club's recent turn in form having a lot to do with his return to form.

◆◆◆◆
While Blacktown City moves ever closer to the Top Five, spare a thought for both Paul Yates and Damon Langan.

Both players are still sidelined with injuries and have been watching proceedings from the Grandstand. "It's been very tough," said Langan.

"There is nothing worse than watching your side every week and not being able to lend a hand." While Yates is out the remainder of the season, Langan is back in light work and could be a part of Brian Brown's plans come semi-final time.

◆◆◆◆
With their senior coaching team of Tony Rassmussen, Greg McGriskin and Mark Higgins, the Penrith Panthers committee has been working hard to secure its playing personnel past the current 2001/2002 summer season.

Bearing in mind their age and their background, the Panthers are extremely pleased with the efforts of

their current squad and the impact that coach Tony Rassmussen has had on the development of the unit.

Coming into a hard position of replacing long-term coach Stan Ackerley at the beginning of the year, Rassmussen has blended the unit well. Rassmussen has promoted and developed great camaraderie in the squad. Examples of this were seen with the manner the unit grouped together during their recent trips away to Central Coast and Belconnen.

Over a number of years Penrith has promoted itself, as being a club that is willing to foster local talent. Therefore it is rewarding to see the Panthers' top squad predominantly comprised of locals, and also it is satisfying to see the number of squad players that have migrated to the top from the Panthers Youth League.

Clearly Panthers executives see the future revolving around their existing unit, and enhancing it with a little more experience. Paramount in the future plans has also been to formalise a "next generation", which will provide a future

stream of talent to cover short and long term losses to the top squad.

Committed to providing its youth an avenue to progress, the Panthers were pleased to see that Brett Eldridge, Luke Infanti and Michael Noro have developed to a level that they were deemed



warranted to be placed in this group. All three players have come through the Panthers Youth League, to progress into the senior ranks.

Eldridge was part of the inaugural Panthers Youth League squads, and like Noro and Infanti first came into senior soccer in the 2000/2001-summer season, mixing the senior commitments with the Youth League obligations. Now migrating officially

to the seniors, both Eldridge and Infanti have developed well in the current year, and the Panthers coaching staff see that they could well develop into regular first grade squad players if they continue to progress as they have been.

Rewarding for the future is the fact that Noro is still eligible for Youth League, and he is currently involved in both the senior and junior facets of the Club. Noro already has seen first grade exposure, coming on to the main game in the recent Leichhardt match, and managing the rise well.

In addition to Eldridge, Infanti and Noro, the Panthers have also negotiated deals with Christian and Caetano Lima, Tim Johnson and goalkeeper Kurt Van Arkkels.

While each of these players are in their first year with the Club, they have fitted in well, have the respect of their fellow players, and more importantly have shown the coaches that they have developed to a level where they will be a future benefit to the first grade unit.

Already Christian Lima has had a number of first

grade appearances, and was in the main side until he sustained an arm injury that left him off the park for a number of weeks.

Recently returned, Lima is slowly gaining his fitness and confidence, and in the 2002/2003 season Rassmussen expects to see big things from him.

His younger brother Caetano has developed well, and is currently pushing hard for a first grade start. Tim Johnson also has worked hard during the season, after coming to the unit from the local Nepean Association Second Division unit. Like Caetano Lima, Rassmussen is looking for an opportunity to provide Johnson first grade exposure.

Van Arkkels came to the Panthers from Blacktown City Demons, who directed him to the Panthers to allow him the opportunity to compete at the top level. While Van Arkkels has not yet seen first-grade, he has been a solid back up for Panthers' main keeper Chad Taylor, and has provided Taylor with the necessary drive to succeed.



Sutherland Sharks

VS.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles



KICK-OFF: 7pm & 5pm, Saturday 23 March 2002

VENUE: Seymour Shaw Park, The Boulevard, Miranda

The poor old Sharks can't take a trick at the moment and they don't get it any tougher than a match up against the White Eagles.

Seven successive losses has left coach Billy McColl at his wits end and he will be using the remaining games to blood some of the talented juniors with a view to next season.

Bonnyrigg need to win with a handsome scoreline if they are to put pressure on the Eagles for the title.

They face Canterbury and the Central Coast in their remaining two games and need the full nine points to have any hope of knocking Parramatta from their perch.

Round Nine result: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 (Knight) Sutherland Sharks 0



Will Fernando Greco start this weekend against the Sharks?

Sutherland Sharks are proudly sponsored by Pipe King, Bezzina's Development, Caltex, Howard Water Proofing, Knock-out Shoes, Realco Glass and Aluminium, Man-Lin-Wah Restaurant

NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER LEAGUE

PRODUCTION: Daniel Kuziow, Elly Vea, Mary Quartly, Mark Stavroulakis

CO-ORDINATOR: Binesh Mudaliar

WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Claire Killeen, Lezette Isaac, Ray Sandell, Nick Guoth, Robbie Bartolillo, Gary Vandeburg, Jo Boyd, Carlos Furtado

PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Furtado

★ All information is courtesy of the New South Wales Soccer Federation.

NSWSF

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GLENWOOD NSW 2768

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NSW Premier League



Bonnyrigg WE

1

Blacktown City

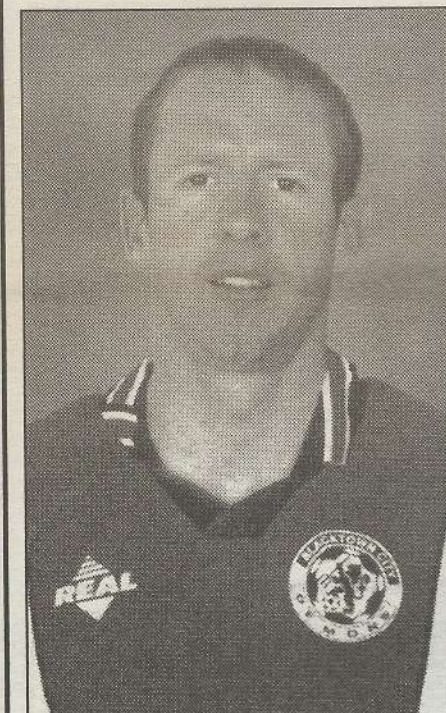
2

By Robbie Bartolillo

In a nail biting encounter, the Demons came from a goal behind, to beat the Eagles 2-1 at the Serbian Centre, thanks largely to Jimmy Nikas, who provided both crucial goals, the Demons reiterated their promising title aspirations, with a tenacious all round performance.

The dangerman for the Demons defence early on was the ingenious Vic Tomasevic, his sublime touches and vision, justifying Adelaide City's interest in him. Indeed the one time Joey player emphasised his potential, when in the 24th minute, he cleverly turned his marker, before nutmegging the advancing John Crawley.

Yet rather than continuing their dominance, the Eagles were then deprived of attacking opportunities, the composed Demons, in particular through Kain Rastall and Naoki Iwaya, adopting a more relaxed possession game.



Damien Foxe was as reliable as ever on Saturday night for the Demons.

In fact the Demons maintenance of possession was a prelude to the equaliser, when in the 31st, Jimmy Nikas weaved in and out of two defenders, before firing his acutely angled shot past the diving Necevski.

The combination of traditional rivalry and three crucial competition points, accommodated for a weary period in the second stanza. Both defences dominated, with Hokin, Willard and Foxe for the Demons, while the Eagles customary defensive resistance comprised of Utjesenovic, Devrimol and West. The midfield battles intensified - the sheer class of Tomasevic opposing the tenacious Smith and creative Rastall. Chances were limited to long range shooting, an abundance of fouls preventing a free flowing contest.

But testament to their perseverance, the Demons rewarded their travelling Gabbie faithful in the 79th minute. Again it was the zippy Nikas, his sense of opportunism, enabling him to break the offside trap, before slotting past the stranded Necevski.

Demons' Coach Brian Brown was ecstatic with the result. "I'm delighted. Bonnyrigg are an excellent team, and to come here and get the three points is an excellent effort. I thought the two goals were super goals from Jimmy (Nikas)."

Blacktown City Demons 2 (Nikas 31/ 79)
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 (Tomasevic 24)

DEMONS: Crawley, Hokin, Foxe, Sermanni (Berbis 67), Willard, Dee (Gatt 87), Smith (Riches 69), Rastall, Iwaya, Nikas, Reid

EAGLES: Necevski, Huseyin, Utjesenovic, Devrimol, West, Kyriazopoulos, Tomasevic, Bradley (Dragas 64), Harding (Oklovski 82), Ghisso (Gomez 80), Aschner

Cautions: Tomasevic 5, Smith 22, Sermanni 43, Utjesenovic 67

Referee: Simon Micallef

Asst. Ref: Adrian Tamplin, Heidi Breeze

Fourth Official: Peter Apostolou



Penrith Panthers

2

Bankstown City Lions

3

By Lezette Isaac

The Bankstown City Lions took the points in their clash against the Penrith Panthers, but not before enduring some pretty anxious moments. The Lions were cruising at one stage, but a second half fight back by the Panthers almost stole the show, at Andrew Roads Field on Saturday night.

Both teams were solid at the start, producing some pretty good attack early on. But it was Penrith who got the upper hand at the set off. After receiving a brilliant ball, Penrith's Danny Hinton bombed a certain goal. With the defence beaten,



Lions' goal-scorer Paul Wearne. Will he be off to American Pro Soccer soon?

all Hinton had to do was beat the keeper, but a fancy chip over the top soared over the crossbar. The Panthers did themselves no favours when they bombed their second chance, this time McCaffrey failing to net the ball with a header.

Despite the pressure, the Lions kept their cool, to register the first goal of the night. Paul Wearne took the ball 30 metres out, ran infield, slicing through the defence. He struck the ball sweetly, passing the goalie and into the net in what was an excellent individual goal in the 41st minute.

Colin Luff continued a dream couple of minutes for the visitors, when he found himself in some space on the right side of the box. Luff squeezed the ball past the keeper, and the Panthers were reeling at 2-0 just one minute from the break.

When Goc Trposki scored in the 62nd minute, the Panthers looked down and out with the scoreboard reading 3-0.

But only two minutes later, Jason Sciberras mounted the beginning of a mini fight back for the home team. Sciberras dazzled the crowd with some clever footwork.

When the Panthers Tim O'Connell got their second in the 76th, the Lions became edgy. A chance to salvage a draw never eventuated as the Lions secured the win, which realistically should have been a greater winning margin.

Lions 3 (Wearne 41, Luff 44, Trposki 62)
Panthers 2 (Sciberras 64, O'Connell 76)

LIONS: Z Josevski, D Luksic (S Yildiz 64), D Kim, P Wearne, R Luksic, A Trposki, A Kanaan (L Carle 68), S Dimitrievski, F Umlil, G Trposki, C Luff (I MacDonald 83)

PANTHERS: C Taylor, G Meilak (O El Ali 61), D Wells, D Gardiner, P Marosevic, J Sciberras, L O'Connell (C Giometti 69), D Hinton (R Hutchinson 57), T O'Connell, M McCaffrey, L Boyd

Yellow Card: L O'Connell

Referee: N Asargiotis

Assistant Refs: G Smith, P Fleming

Fourth Official: E Horvath



Fairfield Bulls

4

Central Coast

2

By Paul Goodwin

For the second week in a row Central Coast served up a strong challenge to a leading title contender when they went down to two late goals at Nineveh Field on Saturday night.

After giving Parramatta a fright the previous week, the Coasties managed to lead Fairfield Bulls at one stage, after coming from a goal down and only conceded the goals that gave the home side the lead and ultimately the win, in the last nine minutes.

Marc Hoenselaars had put the Bulls ahead in the 24th minute when racing onto a long ball from deep to finish superbly with a cracking left foot volley from inside the six yard box.

Paul Richardson had been responsible for providing the precision pass that set up the prolific Bulls' marksman. Prior to that the Coasties had been well in the game and missed some good chances to go to an early lead, though Adam Snyder had rocked the crossbar with a smashing shot in the 17th. At the other end Mitch Daley was able to twice clear off the line to deny the home side and the busy defender was also on hand, as the last man,



Mitch Daley was outstanding in defence for Central Coast.

to do likewise after the break. Richard Harrison had looked certain to score in the first half, but two attempts in succession, on goal, were thwarted by strong defending and some wild finishing by his team mates. After conceding that early goal, the Coasties fought back to score a smart equaliser in the 44th.

Andrew Clark made a good run on the right and switched the ball to Ryan McKendrick, who then laid on a pass for the mobile Mitch Daley on the left.

Daley whipped over a crisp cross and Peter Preston clipped the ball over Frank Mikuletic from 10 yards out in stylish fashion. Soon after the restart, it took a superb save from Mikuletic to deny Gary Wilson whose boomer of a shot from 20 yards was tipped over at the last second.

The visitors then gained the lead in the 55th when Sean Matthews cleared a long ball up field, after a Fairfield attack had broken down and Ricky Metcalf slotted the ball away with a low shot from the right of the area that he did well to angle across the keeper.

With their speed and experience the two Bulls' front runners continued to pose a huge threat to the Coasties and it should have come as no surprise when Mathew Borg eventually nodded the ball over the line, after Snyder had run at the defence and set up Hoenselaars with a shot that was blocked twice, leaving Borg the simple task of heading home under virtually no pressure.

The Bulls eventually regained the lead in the 81st after Nick Bosevski, who had a strong game, sent over a regulation corner from the left that was met at the far post by Borg, with a firm drive, into the bottom right corner of the net.

To wrap things up Fairfield piled on a fourth in the 88th as Hoenselaars frunk the ball forward with ease to

slide in a shot almost unchallenged.

The game was a lively one throughout and was played on a rather warm night, but the pace was fast and much good football was played throughout.

Coasties had no real luck but it must be said they had no answer to the speed and close understanding between Borg and Hoenselaars who are peaking at the business end of the season, just as the whole Bulls' side seems to be doing.

Fairfield Bulls 4 (M Hoenselaars 24/88m, M Borg 57/81m)

Central Coast Coasties 2 (P Preston 44m, R Metcalf 55m)

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Frank Mikuletic, Adam Snyder (Craig Sharpley 88), Mathew Dihm, Paul Bourke, Paul Richardson, Stewart Van Buntum (Ismael Arrarte 86), Marc Hoenselaars, Mathew Borg, Tom Maric, Nick Bosevski, Richard Harrison (Ray Younis 79)

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: Darren Moore, Sean Matthews, Andrew Clark, Mitch Daley, Ryan McKendrick (Karl Freeman 68), Gary Wilson (Damien Smith 74), Peter Haynes, Adam Peatey, Ricky Metcalf (David Brewer 86), Michael Williams, Peter Preston

Cautions: Mitch Daley 24 (CC), Frank Mikuletic 34 (FB), Richard Harrison 70 (FB), Marc Hoenselaars 79 (FB)

Referee: Craig Pearce

Assistants: Les Spagnoil and Roeli Sluiter

Fourth Official: Mick Johnson



NSW Premier League



St George Saints 4 Sutherland Sharks 0

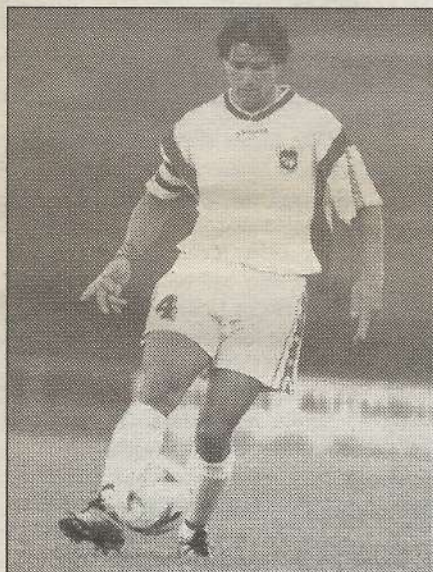
By Greg Stock

Evangelos Petratos might now be in the veteran class, but on Saturday night, he looked anything but, helping himself to a hat-trick and leading the Saints to a 4-0 victory over Sutherland.

At the unlikely Premier League venue of Jubilee Oval at Kogarah, Petratos was the difference between two evenly matched sides, in a performance which rates as one of his best all season.

He firstly got his side moving in the 36th minute when he made a great run at the near post to put away a Nabil Codmani cross. He then turned provider in the 49th minute when he knocked a lovely through ball for Simon Verrender to steam onto and beat an advancing Adam Kurtz with the shot.

A minute later he was again Johnny on the spot to track an Archie Markopoulos break and cut back pass that left the Sutherland defence in total disarray.



Hat-trick hero for the Saints skipper Angelo Petratos.

And just to put the final nail in the Sutherland coffin he scored an easy tap in after a deflected shot found him unmarked at the back post, following a goalmouth scramble in the 57th minute.

While the Saints celebrated the win and the retention of the Sutherland-St. George perpetual trophy, spare a thought for Sutherland Coach Billy McColl. McColl cut a lonely figure on the Sharks bench as his side threw the game away with some silly errors and turnovers in the midfield, just when it seemed they were going to make an impression.

Kris Karanasos and Carlo Musumeci were lively early but it was the midfield that continually broke down and starved their talented forwards of any opportunity to make an impression.

But nothing can detract from the cameo performance of Petratos as he was given a standing ovation by the Saints faithful as he made his way off the park for a well earned early shower.

St. George 4 (Petratos 37 50 57 Verrender 49)
Sutherland Sharks 0

ST. GEORGE: Stacy Alogdellis, Mark Bariamis, Evangelos Petratos (Jade Permall 79), Max Sevares, George Maglis, Archie Markopoulos (John Fotiadis 57), Nabil Codmani, Simon Verrender (Ali Chahine 60), Sal Zullo, Mladen Damjanovic, Bradley Campbell
SUTHERLAND SHARKS: Adam Kurtz, Peter Feehan, Ben Short, Alex Pfengle (Dean Heffernan 46), Alen Stajic, Steve Oklamovski (Chris Moffitt 75), Kris Karanasos, Simon Miller, Carlo Musumeci, Ben Kwasnik, Colin McAusland
Cautions: Zullo (stg) 78 Codmani (stg) 80 McAusland (ss) 82
Referee: Jonathon Streater
Assistant Referees: Terry Goodhew and Andrew Kay
Fourth Official: Ken Sharp



Leichhardt Tigers 2 C'bury M'ville 0

By Paul Goodwin

A lacklustre game at Lambert Park on Sunday night yielded three points for Leichhardt Tigers, against a very disappointing Canterbury-Marrickville.

The Berries gave in meekly to concede two first half goals and failed to make any real impact thereafter, despite showing more resolve in the second half.

The game really lacked any passion, at least from the visitors, while the home side was bright early in the game only to fade as time wore on, two disallowed goals denying them the emphatic win their superiority deserved.

The day had been one of high temperatures and the game was played under cloudless skies, so there was no need for the floodlights to be turned on, but it was a match where neither team really got warm.

The first goal arrived in the 16th minute when Ryan Jones sent over a corner from the right that was met, unimpeded, by Allan Picken, the ball falling invitingly in front of him 6 yards out from goal with nary a defender in sight, let alone the keeper.

Picken slammed the ball into the roof of the net, accepting the gift quite readily, as well he might.

Already heads were down among the Canterbury players, with only another eight minutes elapsing before the Tigers were two up.

Leichhardt skipper Sam La Rocca sent Jones away down the left and the youngster cut the ball back from the byline very smartly for Steve Karavatakis to volley in nicely at the near post. It was a fine goal and probably better than the game deserved, as it was played at a leisurely pace and failed to raise the ardour of the crowd.

As the game wore on Leichhardt twice had the ball in the back of their opponents' net twice but were denied by a linesman's flag both times.

Leichhardt's Allan Picken scored his 5th goal of the season to bury the Berries.



Joe Moric in the 43rd and Steve

Karavatakis in the 55th both were disappointed to see their efforts ruled out.

In the end, though, Leichhardt had more than enough of the play, especially in the first half, to win by a far greater margin.

The introduction later in the game of John Manolopoulos and John Pillemer did lift the Berries a little, but they rarely looked like troubling the Tigers who were in second gear for much of the game.

The best chances for Canterbury came in the second half with Aheleas Kotsopoulos nodding a Manolopoulos cross from the right byline just wide in the 47th and Con Paradisis going just wide with a free kick three minutes later.

After that Les Bihari made some good saves and defenders cleared a few shots to safety, most of them from the busy Karavatakis, but one by James Stubbs-Mills brought the best save from the keeper in the 79th as Canterbury appeared bent on saving face.

Right near the end, a superb, saving tackle inside the box by Anthony Tesoro denied Kotsopoulos the chance to get his side on the scoreboard.

A very easy win by the Tigers, who are still hanging in their making the top three a good contest.

Tigers 1 (Allan Picken 16, Steve Karavatakis 24) **Olympic 0**

LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Andrew Crews, Joe Moric, Anthony Tesoro, Steve Livingstone, John Paul Boutros, James Stubbs-Mills, Harry James (Ross Kethel 74), Allan Picken, Ryan Jones, Steve Karavatakis, Sam La Rocca
CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE

OLYMPIC: Les Bihari, Greg Collins (John Pillemer 76), Mark D'Alessandro, Michael Kladis, Ali Salim, Yane Talceviski, Con Paradisis, Anthony Doumanis (Fernando Pellegrino 46), Angelo Markopoulos, Nihad Alemic (John Manolopoulos 27), Aheleas Kotsopoulos

Cautions: Mark D'Alessandro 6 (CMO), A Doumanis 32 (CMO), J Manolopoulos 81 (CMO)

Referee: Simon Przydacz
Assistants: Ernie Horvath and Ken Sharp
Fourth Official: Srebre Delovski



Parramatta Eagles 1 Belconnen BD 0

By Ray Sandell

Before the game Belconnen Coach, Lino Fiorese said that if his team could keep competition leaders Parramatta Eagles scoreless for the first twenty minutes they would be in with a chance.

The fact that it took the Eagles eighty-nine minutes to score says wonders for Lino comments. A defensive error that would have usually been made by an Under 10 team led to the Parramatta goal in a game that truthfully a draw would have been a very fair result.

From the kick off Parramatta consistently attacked the Belconnen goal but a mixture of good Belconnen luck and poor Parramatta finishing kept the match scoreless. After three minutes the Eagles earned a corner, the ball went to Mark Reveley and from five metres and with an open goal somehow Tony Giannasca pulled off a great save.

The ball rebounded to a Parramatta player and another save by Giannasca, another rebound and Stephen Kemp kicked off the line!

Belconnen attacked, a run by David Arranz he crossed to Daniel Macor, somehow Jason Holmes in the

Parramatta goal got a foot to the ball and deflected it for a corner. Three minutes later Marko Perinovic fired a rocket from twenty metres. Holmes deflected the ball to Macor who twisted and fired the ball into the net but the assistant referee had his flag up indicating that the ball had gone out of play from Holmes save.

A long ball then found Daniel Kukuca by himself bearing down on the Belconnen goal. Giannasca came out and made a brave save at the feet of Kukuca to save the day again. The ball then went to Jim Bakis, he doubled around the penalty area and fired a goal-bound shot but Giannasca was there again.

It was all action but no goals! Lino Fiorese was a happy man! The Eagles kept up the pressure but Bakis, Anthony Mittiga, Daniel Cummins all missed sitters or found Giannasca unbeatable. Half time came and it was still 0-0!

The second half was a different story. Belconnen went on the attack. Stewart Camara made a run through the Eagles defence found Daniel Macor, who had been kept very quiet by the Eagles defence in the first half, and his shot was pushed away by Holmes for a corner.

Belconnen kept up the pressure and made numerous attempts to score but like the first half the strikers were

off target or the goalkeeper, this time Holmes thwarted the attempts. Both teams made changes but all to no avail.

Then it happened! Parramatta got a free kick twenty-five metres out from the Belconnen goal. The defensive wall lined up; Giannasca was behind them about five metres off his line. Jim Bakis looked up and thought, "Whats this?" and ever so gently lobbed the ball over the wall, over Giannasca into an empty net for the winner! Bakis was ecstatic, Giannasca was dumbfounded and Lino Fiorese can all guess! Eighty-nine minutes of

hard work, we had a point against the leaders, a happy trip home on the bus all gone! I wasn't game to go into the Belconnen dressing room but Tam Finlayson for the Eagles was pleased but not getting too carried away.

"Still three games to go," he said, "when we win those and are still on top then I'll be really happy. In this competition anything can happen." How right he is!!!

Parramatta Eagles 1 (J Bakis 89m)
Belconnen Blue Devils 0

PARRAMATTA: Holmes, Meilak, Reveley, Jurilj, Kukuca (Islas), Mittiga (Dwyer), Bakis, Sprod, O'Grady, Delicata, Cummins (Mondello)

BELCONNEN: Giannasca, Zwangobani, Lyons, Katz, Macor, Arranz, S. Camara (Cachia), Perinovic (D. Camara), Dowling, Kemp, Milin

Cautions: Parramatta: Kukuca, O'Grady, Dwyer
Belconnen: S. Camara, Lyons
Referee: Peter Vrtkovski
Assistant Referees: David Finlay, Marc Nemorin
Fourth Official: Robert Kofler



Belconnen's Chilean-born midfielder, Jaime Mauro.



NSW Premier League



CLUB FOCUS

Melita Eagles ... the pride of the Maltese in Sydney

By Kevin Azzopardi (of the Times of Malta)

This place has an all-too-familiar feeling. The smell of bigilla and rabbit fried in garlic fills the air as visitors to the club's restaurant on a Friday evening enjoy a traditional Maltese meal against a backdrop of a hand-painted picture of Grand Harbour.

From the clubhouse, only a few metres away, you can hear giggles of laughter as the noisy fans share a joke or indulge in their usual mickey-taking over a game of snooker or pula.

Welcome to Parramatta Melita Eagles Soccer Club, founded by Maltese migrants in the 1950s.

Melita Eagles' fans come from different walks of life but all share a passion for the beautiful game of football and their country of birth.

"The senior board of the Parramatta Eagles Soccer Club Limited is composed of nine members," Vince Balzan, the president of Parramatta Eagles explained to me as I tried to enhance my knowledge of this interesting club. "The club participates at different levels... the seniors and the reserves take part in the New South Wales Premier League. Our youth academy fields six teams in the following age groups — U-11, U-12, U-13, U-14, U-15, U-17. They compete in the NSW Premier Youth League.

"We also have a juniors club, which is co-ordinated by a sub-committee. This club comprises several teams, ranging from U-6 to all-age."

Melita are a semi-professional club. The players train in the evening, three days a week. The club's senior squad is made up of 20 players who are paid according to a bonus scheme. The NSW Premier League starts in October and ends in May.

At the time of writing, the Eagles were top of the NSW Premier League, three points ahead of Bonnyrigg.

During my sojourn in Sydney, I watched the Eagles play twice... they lost 2-1 to local rivals Blacktown City at home in a highly-charged match but a week later they annihilated Sutherland to the tune of 6-0.

Although soccer is the world's no.1 sport, a combination of factors has undermined its popularity in Australia where Rugby League, Rugby Union and Australian Rules Football provide the main sporting attractions. My view is that soccer in Australia is still tagged as an ethnic sport due to the history of their most prominent clubs.

"The problem with soccer here is that its entertainment value is very low when compared to Rugby and Australian Rules Football. Soccer is fourth on the popularity tier and that makes it very difficult for us to attract sponsorships," the Eagles president remarked.

With an annual budget of \$300,000, the Eagles' club members and fans have to

work overtime to make ends meet.

"We receive sponsorship money from Air Malta and Bank of Valletta, but ironically our major income provider is the Parramatta Rugby League. Money from sponsorships alone is not enough to cover all the expenses. The people at this club work very hard to supplement that income by organising social functions."

One thing that struck me during my frequent visits to the club was the amount of time members and fans spend on voluntary work before and during home games.

National Soccer League

The National Soccer League is the highest competition in Australia but it has also been the subject of scathing criticism lately due to its poor standard. The format of the leagues, without relegations and promotions, does little to help soccer's cause.

"The hierarchy is wrong insofar as there are too many associations and an excessive number of shareholders who are more concerned with safeguarding

Maltese Premier League, the Eagles president is of the opinion that the top Maltese clubs can hold their own against NSL sides, most of whom have full-time professional players.

"When I was in Malta with an Eagles selection in 1998, I went to see Valletta Vs Birkirkara and I was impressed by the standard of play. At the time, I thought that the Maltese Premier League was on a par with the NSL but now I would go as far as to say that Malta's competition is even better.

"But that is not to say that we don't

United has further cemented their reputation in youth development.

"Our agreement with United is different from other partnerships between European clubs and Aussie teams in that we are not just running an academy for United, we are their representatives in the entire Oceania region.

"Indeed, the professional manner with which our agreement with United has handled indicates what this club can achieve when people from a business background and with a passion for the club are involved," the Eagles' president concluded.

Historical overview...

*The Melita club was founded by a group of Maltese migrants on June 13, 1953 and the Malta Eagles club was founded in 1955.

*In 1956, Melita SC merged with Malta Eagles and became known as the Melita Eagles United SFC. Melita were one of the foundation members of a new soccer body called the NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs.

*In its early days, Melita Eagles moved from one pitch to another before a permanent venue was found in 1980. The new ground was situated in the district of Granville where a new stadium was built with the assistance of the Parramatta Council. It was named Melita Stadium.

*The club has won various honours in the NSW Federation competitions. They were State League Premiers in 1980, 1983, 1986, 1989 and 1997 and Grand Final winners in 1985, 1988, 1989, 1996 and 1997.

*Parramatta Melita Eagles, as the club has become known over the years, were promoted to the National Soccer League at the end of 1983 only to be demoted at the end of the following season. When summer soccer was introduced, in Australia in 1989, the Eagles were also admitted to the National Soccer League. Their participation among the elite lasted six years.

*During their six-year spell in the NSL, Parramatta Melita Eagles clinched the NSL Cup in 1990-91 and 1993-94 and were beaten finalists in 1992-93. In 1993-94, Parramatta Eagles won the NSL Challenge Cup after beating Marconi 2-0. Late in 1993 they were the first Australian club to be included in the top 100 clubs of the world.

*In 1997, the club set a new record when three grades made a clean sweep of honours - premiers and grand final winners.

Please e-mail your comments to the author, Kevin Azzopardi at kazzopardi@timesofmalta.com

The NSW Soccer Federation would like to thank Kevin Azzopardi for his permission to use this article. Also, thanks to Vince Balzan and Sam E. Vella OAM for their input.



Home of the Parramatta Melita Eagles, Melita Stadium.

On the Saturday before the much-awaited re-union match - Malta U-21 coach Ray 'Zazu' Farrugia was flown over to play in the oldies' match on February 17 - board members and fans set about cleaning the stadium, trimming the grass in and around the pitch and stocking the canteens.

The wives of the board members were also called on to man the canteen during match days.

Although Parramatta Eagles remains a predominantly Maltese club, the president believes that it should step up its efforts to lure more people from the Parramatta district, whatever their nationality.

"Down the road, I believe we would have no other choice because the number of Maltese migrants is diminishing. We are striving hard to bring the old fans back to our fold. Zazu's visit here was also aimed at attracting the old fans to the club.

"However, we cannot afford to rely on these people alone. We must now try to extend the popularity of the club to the entire district."

their interests. Furthermore, the league's structure also leaves much to be desired.

"There are 12 teams in the NSL and the top five go into the play-offs leading to the grand final. A team that finishes fifth in the league but goes on to win the grand final takes all the credit.

"There are no relegations because the NSL operates a franchise system. Teams are only admitted to the NSL if they meet the criteria set by its controlling body. It's a kind of licensing system. If a team no longer satisfies all the requirements of the NSL, it is kicked out."

Melita Eagles enjoyed two spells in the NSL in the Eighties and Nineties but were shown the exit door because they failed to meet the requirements.

Their dismissal still rankles with the club president, who feels that they were treated unfairly.

Balzan also shared the general view that the level of soccer in Australia has decreased significantly.

"The standard of the NSL has gone down. More and more Australian players are seeking pastures new in Europe."

Despite on-going criticism of the

have some talented players in Australia. When our U-17 selection toured Malta, we played a series of games and I was very disappointed that no clubs came to run the rule over our players.

"I thought that there were three to four players who could have made it in the Maltese Premier League. They were all youths and had they been taken on board at such a tender age, I am sure they would have established themselves in Malta," Balzan, himself a former youth coach, said.

Melita have earned a reputation for producing exciting talents and recently, one of their former youth players, Ahmed Elrich started trials with a Norwegian club. Balzan singled out three young players with a Maltese surname whom, he thinks, can easily adapt to Maltese soccer.

"Goalkeeper Michael Xuereb has potential and, at 22, time is on his side. Patrick Gatt, a 21-year-old defender who is a product of Parramatta Eagles, has also been doing well lately. He is fast and has a good tackle. Ben Delicata is a versatile right wing-back who has already broken into our first team."

The Eagles' link-up with Manchester



NSW Premier League



SCOREBOARD

ROUND 19

PREMIER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

ST GEORGE SAINTS4 (A Petratos x 3, S Verrender)	SUTHERLAND SHARKS0
FAIRFIELD BULLS4 (M Hoenselaars x 2, M Borg x 2)	CENTRAL COAST2 (P Preston, R Metcalf)
BONNYRIGG WE1 (V Tomasevic)	BLACKTOWN CITY2 (J Nikas x 2)
PENRITH PANTHERS2 (J Sciberras, T O'Connell)	BANKSTOWN CITY3 (P Wearne, C Luff, G Trposki)
PARRAMATTA EAGLES ..1 (J Bakis)	BELCONNEN BD0
LEICHHARDT TIGERS2 (A Picken, S Karavatakis)	C'BURY M'VILLE0

UNDER 19

ST GEORGE SAINTS3	SUTHERLAND SHARKS4
FAIRFIELD BULLS0	CENTRAL COAST0
BONNYRIGG WE2	BLACKTOWN CITY1
PENRITH PANTHERS2	BANKSTOWN CITY1
PARRAMATTA EAGLES ..4	BELCONNEN BD1
LEICHHARDT TIGERS2	C'BURY M'VILLE0

RESCHEDULED FIXTURE: ROUND 13: PENRITH PANTHERS 0 LEICHHARDT TIGERS 7

TABLES

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	19	14	1	4	56	22	43
Bonnyrigg WE	19	13	1	5	46	18	40
Leichhardt Tigers	19	11	4	4	37	27	37
Fairfield Bulls	19	11	3	5	43	36	36
Blacktown City Demons	19	10	5	4	44	25	35
Belconnen Blue Devils	19	11	2	6	38	27	35
Bankstown City Lions	19	8	5	6	39	42	29
Canterbury Marrickville	19	5	3	11	22	36	18
Central Coast Coasties	19	4	5	10	21	34	17
St George Saints	19	3	4	12	26	50	13
Penrith Panthers	19	1	8	10	21	38	11
Sutherland Sharks	19	1	3	15	19	56	6

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Central Coast Coasties	19	13	3	3	48	15	42
Leichhardt Tigers	19	13	2	4	43	14	41
Blacktown City Demons	19	12	1	6	42	26	37
Parramatta Eagles	19	11	4	4	35	23	37
Fairfield Bulls	19	10	4	5	41	28	34
Belconnen Blue Devils	19	8	4	7	44	40	28
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	8	2	9	36	34	26
Penrith Panthers	19	6	4	9	27	34	22
Canterbury Marrickville	19	5	4	10	19	32	19
St George Saints	19	4	4	11	20	41	16
Sutherland Sharks	19	3	2	14	30	58	11
Bankstown City Lions	19	3	2	14	15	55	11

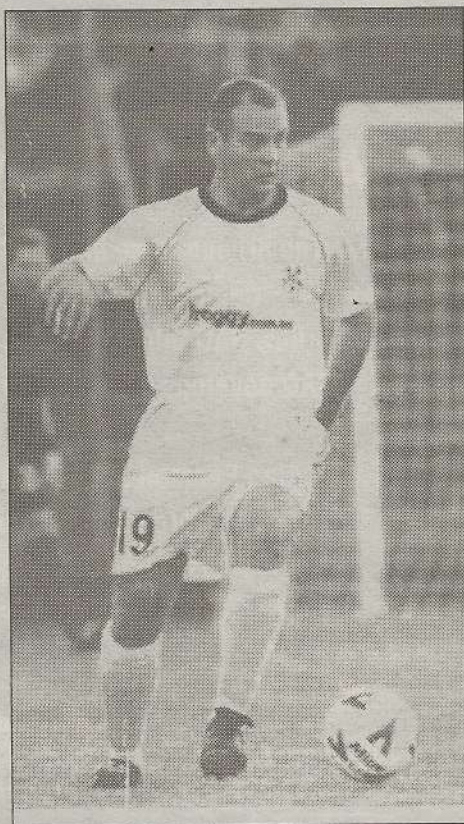
TOP SCORERS

18 Jimmy Aschner (BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES)
16 Jim Bakis (PARRAMATTA EAGLES)
16 Marc Hoenselaars (FAIRFIELD BULLS)
15 Daniel Macor (BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS)

Fairfield Bulls in Action



Richard Harrison



Jason Connolly



Paul Bourke



Ali Akbal



NSW Premier League



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Players Value Green and Gold



By Bert van Bedaf

Not a week goes by without a reminder that Australian sport is steeped in its multicultural origins. Soccer is a prime example.

Whenever national league club Melbourne Knights hits the net at Sunshine, the home crowd rises from the terraces as one, chanting "Croatia, Croatia", in a salute to the club's proud heritage.

When fellow NSL club South Melbourne gains the lead at Bob Jane stadium, their Greek supporters urge the side on with an emphatic "Hellas, Hellas".

And in the Victorian Premier

League Fitzroy City's "Serbia" and Bulleen's "Juve", are all reminders of the various clubs' migrant roots and supporter base, be it in the Balkan countries, Greece or Italy.

These traditions won't die. They form part of the nation's colourful patchwork quilt of origins of its people and its sporting traditions.

They also have their consequences, not only in a club's existence but also on the international scene as well.

Five years ago talented Melbourne Knights sweeper Joe Simunic declined to play for Australia. At 18, he twice rejected an U21 call-up.

He transferred to Hamburg, Germany, to advance his career and his opportunity to play for Croatia, the country of his parents' birth.

His parents were baffled but Canberra-born Simunic, who attended the Australian Institute of Sport at taxpayers' expense, was crystal clear. "It is more or less a career decision," he said at the time.

Australia's 1974 World Cup captain Johnny Warren agreed.



Sasho Petrovski: Was also asked to represent the National FYROM side.

Sterjovski, Saso Petrovski and Joey Space Dilevski.

"I got a call from the national coach (Nikola Ilievski). It was quite flattering. He approached me, saying 'We'd like you to play for the (FYROM) team. What are your thoughts?', Sterjovski told SBS's On The Ball last Sunday.

"I told him I'm an Australian and I've already played for Australia.

It's nice to ask, but I was born

in Australia (Wollongong) and I've gone through the ranks at every level and I don't think it's fair to turn my back on Australia. And that was it. We left it at that," he said.

According to former FYROM coach Donco Adonovski, Petrovski is "keen" on the idea.

However, according to Dilevski's agent John Grimaud, the Joey is a committed Aussie player.

"He's the youngest Joey in the team and his heart is set on playing for Australia. He's got more chance playing for Australia than the FYROM and his dream is to play (together) with Harry Kewell," Grimaud said.

There are moments in time when loyalties for an individual reside overseas. In life, in business and in sport, the pendulum has swung for some outside Australia for one reason or another in a globalised world.

Rupert Murdoch became an American citizen to advance his business interests. David Hicks chose another world's fight to express his adopted religion. Tennis star Jelena Dokic turned her back on Australian and

embraced her native Yugoslavia (Serbia), like Joe Simunic chose his path how he saw fit.

On the other side of the ledger, sports people have taken out Australian citizenship to represent this country at the highest level, such as Romanian-born Andrew Ilie in tennis, Russian-born pole vaulter Tanya Grigorieva in athletics and Russian-born Kosta Tsyu in boxing.

In soccer, former Melbourne Knights champion midfielder, Lubo Lapsansky became an Australian citizen only weeks ago.

Slovak-born, Lapsansky joined the Melbourne Knights during their two championships in the mid-1990s and later signed for now defunct NSL club Carlton.

He briefly returned to the Knights last season and now plays for Sydney club Parramatta Power.

He was considered for the Slovak Olympics team two years ago but declined.

"I'd love to crown my NSL career with a first-up call for Australia," Lapsansky said last week.

Let's not forget that the 1974 World Cup side comprised a host of players from Scotland, England, Germany and Yugoslavia, who had called Australia home and represented the nation at the highest level, including coach Rale Rasic.



Lubo Lapsansky: Became an Australian citizen and wants to play for Australia.

There are people who leave and people who arrive. There are those who depart and who join the great Aussie melting pot. It balances out in the long run and it is part of Australia's vast multicultural mix. One way or the other, everybody wins.

"I got a call from the national coach, saying 'We'd like you to play for the FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) team. I told him I'm an Australian and I've already played for Australia. I was born in Australia and I've gone through the ranks at every level. I don't think it's fair to turn my back on Australia.'"
Sterjovski on SBS On The Ball program.



Mile Sterjovski: Received a call from the FYROM coach to play for their country, but declined stating his an 'Aussie' through and through."

"He (Simunic) is making a career move," he said at the time.

Simunic's inclination to play for Croatia was also influenced by the Croatian Football Association, which was covertly but actively recruiting young Australians of Croatian heritage to play for Croatia.

Simunic achieved his ambition last year and he might just be part of his adopted country's World Cup tournament in Japan and South Korea in less than a 100 days' time.

There are other examples. Serie-A star Christian Vieri could have represented Australia but now features for Italy in World Cups. Eligible for Australia, Tony Dorigo opted to play for England in the past.

The Former Yugoslav country is scouting for talent down-under. Active but covert recruitment is under way. Australian-born players of FYROM parentage have been approached to join the national side.

Apart from the fact that some have already represented Australia and can't play for another country, they don't appear to be too interested to desert the green and gold.

Those reportedly on the wanted list are Socceroo Mile



Christian Vieri: Could have pulled on the Green and Gold of Australian but opted for the blue of Italy.

Blues make meal for Bergers



By Bert van Bedaf

Heidelberg United's leaky defence was found wanting again as the defending champion went down 3-1 at home to Fawknor Blues last Saturday night.

All goals were scored in an entertaining first half. The Bergers now have conceded more goals (22) in six games (four losses and two draws) as they did last season (19) and there appears little progress in stemming the alarming tide.

In a game without much style or grace, Fawknor came up trumps, but their minimalist approach left little to admire. The ball was kicked out of play with abandon, while Heidelberg's physical tactics also served them poorly.

In charge for his third game, Vlado Vanis came up against Joe Biskic, the coach he replaced at the Melbourne Knights three seasons ago.

Vanis finds losing always hard to accept, but while they are mates losing to Biskic was extra tough. "I don't like to lose against Joe. We're good friends but not on the pitch," Vanis said.

"Every game is the same. It doesn't matter who you play. You want to win the game. Even if it is your brother on the other side," Biskic said.

In fact, it was a night of Knights, with Vanis, Biskic, Damian Vojtek (in midfield for Heidelberg), Ante Deak, Joe Spiteri and Ivan Duzel (all Blues) making up a complement of six former Knights players and coaches.

After a disastrous start, the Bergers managed two draws in the last fortnight and looked like turning their form around, while the Blues lost for the first time last week after two wins and two draws. Yet, after another dreadful 90 minutes, the Bergers were still searching for their first win of the season.

"We have the tallest defence in the league and they (Fawknor) scored from corners. We played like kindergarten children," Vanis said.

"The players work hard and we score goals, but we lose concentration and all the hard work is gone. We cop goals like kids," he said.

Having retired as a player at 43, this season Biskic has taken charge of the Blues, who boast former Knights teammate Spiteri in the side.

Without an overseas contract, Spiteri is settling at Fawknor in between offers, while being managed by his cousin and teammate John Grimaud.

"Joe's staying indefinitely with Fawknor until something comes up for him," Grimaud said.

Still nursing a groin injury, Grimaud watched from the sidelines. The central defender said he still wanted to play, although his new job with player agency Proactive Sports Management Group was taking up much of his time.

It was that other former Knight, Deak, who got Fawknor off to a flying start. The game was only 40 seconds old, when Deak hooked on to a through-ball by Tony Sterjovski and found the net through three startled Berger defenders.

It was another inauspicious beginning for Heidelberg who continue to struggle keeping a tight defence and finish a game with a clean sheet.

The Blues again relied on the wily Duzel in the centre and fielded fast-moving Solomon Islands youth star Henry Fa'arodo behind the forward line.

"I told the guys we needed to show character tonight. We knew this would be a hard game. Heidelberg was coming back from early losses and we needed to bounce back from last week's loss," Biskic said.



Vlado Vanis: Heidelberg coach unhappy about his teams performance.

"We had a good start. We put them under pressure and scored in the first minute. We had some pressure in the second half, but we finished on a high note," he said.

Biskic said he was impressed with Fa'arodo. "He had a good game and he scored. He has good touch and he's impressed me."

With himself out of midfield, Biskic is relying heavily on 38-year-old Duzel to conduct play from the centre. "We need someone like Duzel. He is an experienced player and he always gives 100 per cent," Biskic said.

Vanis had left Brian MacNicol on the bench, but brought him on in the second half, and regular 'keeper Sam Frangos was back in goal after his nightmare run. Out of favour under departed coach Peter Ollerton, Nick Lazarevski found himself in the starting line-up under Vanis, but he was substituted in the second half.

His co-striker and a former VPL top scorer,

Peter Kakos got the Bergers level when he poked the ball in the net after 23 minutes and it looked like they would make a game of it and possibly snatch their first win.

But Heidelberg's rickety back-line was caught again in the 30th minute from a corner. Deak whipped the ball at the far post, where captain Tony Schipano banged a header on target. His attempt was saved off the line but quicksilver Fa'arodo drilled home his first goal in the premier league on the rebound for 2-1.

Spiteri got his first goal for Fawknor with a powerful header in the 36th minute, just about sealing the game for the Blues. Tony Sterjovski launched the corner that the former Knights forward clinically finished.

The Bergers almost retaliated a few minutes later. Lazarevski found himself in a one-on-one with Blues 'keeper Steve Tilovski on an acute angle at the near post.

But his delicate right-foot chip shaded the outside of the far post for a goal kick, allowing the Blues a comfortable 3-1 lead at half time.

Fawknor could have gone further ahead on the hour, if not for some excellent goal keeping by Frangos. The Berger guardsman first blocked a Duzel shot and then pushed Sterjovski's rebound for a corner that was cleared.

The Berger defence again denied Sterjovski in the 76th minute, while Spiteri stranded on Frangos, who made some fine saves, despite the three goals.

Heidelberg did find the net in the 81st minute, but referee Hakan Anaz disallowed George Georgiadis's strike for a foul on Schipano.

Despite a change of coach, the bottom Bergers are no nearer finding a solution to their ramshackle performances than they were three-weeks ago, while the Blues got their season back on a top-five track with a decisive win.



Joe Spiteri: Scored his first goal for Fawknor Blues.

Sharks Coach dumps on Ref

By Bert van Bedaf

Olympic Sharks coach Gary Phillips did not hide his frustrations at being outclassed by South Melbourne in the Sharks' 3-0 loss at Bob Jane stadium last Sunday, sheeting his ire home to West Australian referee



Garry Phillips: Outraged at decisions made by referee Angelo Nardi in his sides 3-0 loss to South Melbourne.

Angelo Nardi.

Nardi added two minutes of injury time to the first half during which youngster Ray Sekulovski scored South's second goal, which put the home side in the box seat and the Sharks way behind.

"I'm obviously disappointed with the result. I thought South Melbourne were brilliant for 15 minutes. But other than that I thought we always were in the game, until two goals came late in the first half," Phillips said.

"Where the referee got two minutes from added-on, I've got no idea. I thought he was a disgrace. Where they get these people from is beyond me."

"We had a player sent off last week. We have a couple more players missing next week because of suspensions."

"For what reasons I don't know, but they (referees) seem to just destroy the game. They think people come to watch them rather than the game and it's disappointing," he said.

ABC-TV's Classic Series

TWO weeks ago ABC-TV kicked off its classic collection of a 13 part series on the 'History Of Football'.

Tomorrow night, (Wednesday 20th March), at 11pm, ABC television will screen its third episode of this invaluable series, subtitled, 'Brasil'. This highly emotional and nostalgic episode spotlights the historic and rapid rise, (and of late), demise of Soccer in Brasil.

Again superbly hosted and narrated by British actor Terence Stamp, this brilliant series vividly traces the game being pioneered into Brasil by all people, the English, as they did with the Germans much earlier.

Within a short period of time the Brazilians rapidly embraced and mastered this wonderful game.

This was a new game to them which had generated more excitement, passion and wealth across the World than any single other sport on the planet. By 1958, in Sweden, having catastrophically lost the World crown in 1950 to bitter arch rivals Uruguay, Brasil finally conquered the World of Soccer whilst simultaneously unveiling on the international stage a skinny 17 year old, and future mega-star, 'the Black Pearl', PELE.



PELE: Brazilian legend.

The 1950 World Cup won by Uruguay, embedded extreme bitter memories into every single Brazilian. It was the only World Cup not won by playing a Final. No Final was played as this Cup for the first, and last time, was decided purely on the results of a Round Robin.

Following her first ever victorious World Championship in Sweden, and to serve warning that Brazilian Soccer was now on its way to regular World supremacy, the South Americans again won the World Cup in 1962.

The glorious gladiatorial

Garrincha, (Brasil's legendary right flanker with the deformed left ankle), to this very day is credited with having won this World Cup on his very own.

Tragically, the great Garrincha in later years killed himself through severe alcoholic abuse.

In tomorrow night's episode you'll see rare footage of the great Garrincha in historic action (1962), plus Pele, Carlos Alberto, Rivalino.

This wonderful footballing documentary then escalates into theorising just why Brazilian Soccer of late is losing its power, flair and supremacy.

Massive building constructions and economic development in the 70s and 80s in many of the big Brazilian cities, is blamed in edging out valuable space for playing fields for youngsters.

Another theory, (which even ABSW last year suspiciously suggested), is due to the massive exodus of Brazilian players, annually being drafted to Europe, where 'playing for result only' counts. In Europe, Brazilian players have had their colour and native flair silently coached and regimented out of them.

Today, Brasil's other legend, the fabulous Pele, at the age of 62, strongly lives on. Tomorrow night, Pele is questioned on how great he was. 'The Black Pearl' smilingly answers: "God made Beethoven and Mozart for music. He made Pele for Soccer."

When further questioned if ever there is going to be another Pele?

"No. There is only one Pele because my Mother and Father have closed down the 'machine'."

In the coming weeks, (all on Wednesday nights at 11pm), ABC-TV will screen 10 more classic episodes which will include clips on other footballing greats such as the boss from Argentina, Alfredo di Stefano, the magnificent Georgie Best, England and Manchester United's famous Bobby Charlton, even highlights of the great Hungarian team of 1953. All episodes are studied with historical background data plus a multitude of interviews of legends in Soccer with rare footage.

ABSW strongly advises readers do not miss this magnificent series, 'The History Of Football'.

Victorian Premier League 2002

Heidelberg United
(Peter Kakos)

1 Fawknor Blues
(Ante Deak, Henry Fa'arodo, Joe Spiteri)

3 St. Albans Saints
(Krunoslav Kupinar)

1 Port Melbourne Sharks 2
(Cameron Pinto, George Hinopoulos)

Sunday 17 March 2002

Fitzroy City
(Vasko Trpcovski)

1 Whittlesea Stallions 2
(Denis Elici, Joe Montagnese)

Altona East Phoenix
(Nick Papadopoulos)

Preston Lions

Bentleigh Greens
(Theo Constantinou)

1 Altona Magic 0

0 Green Gully Cavaliers
(Lee Kutlesovski, Henry Velkovski)

1 Bulleen Zebras 1
(Dahir Gnjidic)

2002 Premier League Ladder - Round 6

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	6	4	2	0	8	1	14
Bentleigh Greens	6	4	2	0	10	5	14
Port Melbourne Sharks	6	4	0	2	14	9	12
Fawknor Blues	6	3	2	1	11	7	11
Altona East Phoenix	6	3	1	2	7	8	10
Whittlesea Stallions	6	2	3	1	9	9	9
Preston Lions	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Fitzroy City	6	2	1	3	5	6	7
St. Albans Saints	6	2	1	3	5	8	7
Altona Magic	6	1	1	4	10	10	4
Bulleen Zebras	6	0	2	4	6	10	2
Heidelberg United	6	0	2	4	10	22	2

ROUND 7

FRIDAY, 16 MARCH, 6:15PM

Port Melbourne Sharks SC vs. Essendon Royals SC

SATURDAY, 17 MARCH, 5:00PM

Altona Magic SC vs. Green Gully Cavaliers SC

SUNDAY, 18 MARCH, 3:00PM

Bentleigh Greens SC vs. Altona East Phoenix SC

St Albans Saints SC vs. Heidelberg United SC

Fawknor Blues SC vs. Dandenong Thunder SC

Bulleen Zebras SC vs. Preston Lions SC

Richard Garcia: "I was always determined to make it here at West Ham"



By Steve Blowers and
www.hammersnews.com

It's been a long haul from Western Australia to West Ham United. But some five years after going walkabout from his native Perth, Richard Garcia is finally starting to realize his Aussie dream as he takes his first, tentative steps in the



Michael Garcia: Richard's brother, currently playing his football at Perth Glory.

Premiership.

"I was always determined to make it here at West Ham no matter how long it took," the 20-year-old exclusively tells Hammers News Magazine just days after being offered a new two-year contract.

"I've had a few games now and hopefully I can stay in the first-team frame from here onwards.

"When I was back home in Australia I had a few offers to join First and Second Division clubs including Nottingham Forest and West Bromwich, Albion, but I thought I'd hang out and try to play for a Premiership club and now I've achieved what I set out to do. Hopefully, I can keep progressing.

"Some players make it into the first team when they're 18, while some have to wait until they're 23. It's all about patience, improving your game and understanding how the other players around you play.

"As far as I'm concerned I've had to wait but I'm just happy that I've now started to show that I can make the grade."

Down Under, the Garcia family's Spanish ancestry had meant that Richard and his older brother Michael, were brought up on a staple diet of Real Madrid. But when the Hammers' Centenary Tour rolled into town in May 1995, it did not take too long for young Garcia to find out about West Ham as Western Australia produced a hard-fought 2-2 draw against the jet-lagged East Enders.

While speedy Stan Lazaridis produced the cracker at the WACA that was destined to make him Upton Park's pioneering Wizard from Oz, Garcia, an enraptured, soccer-mad ball boy watched envi-

ously from the Perth pitch-side.

"I actually won a signed West Ham shirt that night," recalls Richard who was oblivious to the fact that one day he would actually be pulling on a claret and blue shirt for real.

Indeed, just a year or so later, the 15-year-old son of engineer John and his bank clerk-wife



Richard Garcia: Aussie star doing well at Upton Park.

Maria made the long, lonely 10,000-mile journey to Upton Park.

"It was quite hard leaving all my family and friends behind to go across to the other side of the world," admits Richard as he looks back on the day he waved goodbye to the folks back home.

"With all my aunts and uncles there are about 25 of us, and I'd grown up as a little Spanish boy but since I've been in England there haven't been too many people to speak to in Spanish!

"Although my parents were

very pleased for me, I have been homesick at times. "Sure, it's helped to have the likes of fellow Aussies such as Chris Coyne, Stan Lazaridis, Michael Ferrante, Steve Laurie and Hayden Foxe around at One time or another because they've all been in the same boat.

"They've joined in the mickey taking and joking and whenever you're on top of your game you never think about home, too much.

"But there have been times when I've been down. If I didn't think things were going my way or if I didn't think that I was progressing in training or in matches I'd start feeling low."

Certainly, life could not have got any worse for the gutted Garcia than when he went on loan to neighbors Leyton Orient in August 2000.

For after forging a useful partnership with the nomadic, experienced Carl Griffiths that yielded 11 goals in 16 games, the rookie's season was brought to an abrupt halt when he damaged his knee ligaments at Cheltenham Town, later that autumn.

"It was a big set-back," observes Richard whose personal haul had amounted to four goals from 18 starts for Tommy Taylor's O's. "Fortunately, though, I recovered quite quickly from my anterior cruciate operation and since then there haven't been any hiccups."

Having regained his fitness after proving that he could cut the mustard in the lower divisions, a move away from Upton Park was beginning to look likely for the reluctant youngster.

But a combination of Harry Redknapp's departure and Glenn Roeder's elevation to manager has

proved the catalyst for that offer of an extended stay.

"Glenn has always encouraged me to do my best and it's been good for us younger boys that he, personally, used to be our coach. He already knew at close hand what we could do and that's helped a lot. Glenn's seen me progress and he's always been trying to get the best out of me.

"I'm a central midfielder but I'll play wide or even at left back if that's what the gaffer wants and it gets me in the team. In fact, any position's good for me right now!" continues Garcia who made substitute appearances in our defeats at Reading and Leeds United before being handed starts at Bolton Wanderers and Aston Villa.

"Since I've been over here in England I've always wanted to play in the Premiership and that's



Glenn Roeder: West Ham coach happy with Garcia's progress in the Premier League.

why I've never really wanted to leave and try my luck in the Nationwide League.

"I'm really glad that I've now been given the chance to carry on doing that with West Ham, not only because they're the club I first joined but because they've always looked after me really well."

Brother Michael — a fellow Australian U-21 international — had followed in his sibling's footsteps, but having failed to make the breakthrough in Belgium he recently quit Anderlecht to rejoin his home town National Soccer League side — Perth Glory.

That leaves Richard flying the family-flag in Europe.

But with that confidence-boosting two-year deal on the table it's a challenge he clearly relishes.

"We're just sorting out the finer points of the contract and there shouldn't be any problems there," he insists. "I just hope that I can keep improving and get a few more games under my belt between now and May."

"The Premiership's so much different from playing for the reserves, but the older players have really helped me.

"As I play more matches, I think that I'll really start getting to grips with first team football.

"I realize that I'm still not fully up to the pace of the Premier League yet and that I've still got to work hard on sorting out the finer points of my game.

"Hopefully between now and the end of the season, though, I'll keep gaining more and more experience and really begin to learn my trade."

Eric Anabalon:

Marconi Stallions Star in the Making



By Vincent Vartuli

Eric Anabalon is one of many young players who have been given a chance at Marconi this season. Being one of the youngest players on a first grade contract, Eric has played understudy to John Maisano for most of the season.

Yet his future potential is ever present having been one of the stars of the youth league thus far having scored a phenomenal 20 goals and being the top scorer in that league. Marconi has repaid Eric's ability and potential, signing him up to a two year first grade contract.

Eric started out his career at a local Uruguayan club at the tender age of three. He went on to later play his junior soccer

for the Stallions cadet sides before moving to the Parramatta Eagles then back to Marconi playing with the colts then the youth team.

His efforts came to fruition this year with Eric being handed his first grade debut coming on as striker against Parramatta Power in November.

The 20-year-old is enthusiastic about his football career with Eric commenting "It is the best feeling being a full time footballer, you get paid for doing what you love."

Eric also says it would be a dream of his to play regular football overseas, especially after having a taste of it in Switzerland on a recent trial.

On his foray overseas, Eric felt that the demands on a player are a lot more difficult having to train twice a day every day, he also commented on the professionalism of all the players overseas. Lets face it soccer is life in many countries and Eric's observations have strengthened that fact.

The young striker has been pleased

with his form this season especially with his goal average. Yet Eric still remains modest saying "some times you come off the field feeling like you have done well other games you come off feeling as if you haven't."

This outburst of modesty is something that will help Eric go a long way in his footballing endeavors. Eric would still love a crack at first grade, yet realizes that John Maisano is in electric form. He is happy at the moment to be his understudy and to learn off him.

When asked if Marconi still had a chance of the top six he was hopeful that the boys "will pull it off, winning all the games on the way to the top six".

Career influences in Anabalon's life have been his father, and former Marconi youth coach now Northern Spirit assistant coach John-Paul De Marigny.

Eric's future looks extremely promising and it looks as if Eric will be able to pay back the faith that so many people have had on him in the future.



Eric Anabalon: Leading National Youth League scorer.

Refugee Side set to Tour the East Coast of Australia

By Graham Cooke

They call themselves the Tiger XI. There are more than 11, perhaps as many as 40 boys and youths.

Together they have two things in common — they are all refugees, and they all love soccer.

Later this month the Brisbane-based Tigers set off on another journey, not as long or as hazardous as that which brought them to Australia. A squad of 20 will travel down the East Coast playing matches in Toowoomba, Tamworth, Armidale, Dubbo, Canberra and Sydney.

The club was started by Camilla Cowley who met

some of the original youngsters while teaching them English in Brisbane.

"They were all Afghans from the Hazara minority whose families had sent them overseas to escape the Taliban," she said.

"They came here on boats, had been granted temporary protection visas and let out of the detention centres, but they had no-one — most of them hadn't heard from their families since they left Afghanistan more than two years ago.

"I realised they needed a focus, a community they could call their own, and as they all loved soccer, I decided to form a team."

At first it was a simple Saturday afternoon kick-around in a local park, but as

numbers grew, swelled by children from other refugee groups, including Sudan and Eritrea, they began to play friendly matches and entered a couple of one-off competitions.

Cowley says the Tigers win more games than they lose against teams roughly in their age group. "Against adult sides it is more difficult," she said.

"The tour was arranged because people in the various centres heard about us and invited us to come. There's a possibility we will play three games in Canberra, against the Press Gallery journalists at Parliament House, Belconnen United and a Dickson College team which will be especially chosen to represent as many different

nationalities as possible."

The team decided on their name because a mountain range in the Hazara region of Afghanistan translates into English as 'Tiger'. Soccer Australia donated some balls and a training strip.

Colours are maroon and white. "They happen to be the same as Queensland, but they also belonged to the Western District Bulldogs Australian football club who took us in when we had nowhere else to go," Cowley said. "The boys decided to adopt them as a mark of thanks and respect."

"The Bulldogs no longer exist as a senior club, but their colours will live on in the Tigers XI."

Confusion at the ACT Federation Cup

By Graham Cooke

Teams playing in the Group One 'Group of Death' section of the ACT Federation Cup had an unexpected weekend off when they arrived at Woden Park to find the goalposts were still in their off-season storerooms.

The ground is used as an athletics field during the summer and with no posts to hand, the match between Premiership heavyweights Canberra Deakin and Gungahlin Juventus, together with the Monaro v ANU (State League 3) fixture were postponed to a midweek date.

Three teams — Capital City Suns from the Premiership, and State League Division One outfits University of Canberra and



The coveted ACT Federation Trophy held by former Sports Minister Bill Stefanik.

Canberra Olympic, all recorded wins to make certain of a place in the quarter-finals.

Suns beat newcomers Southern Fablelands 11-1, Olympic beat Cooma 4-2 and the University had a comfortable 3-0 win over Canberra City.

There was no joy for Olympic's Premiership side which lost 3-1 to Tuggeranong United to become the first team from the top division to be eliminated. Olympic scored first but United hit back through Jose Exposito, Loic David and Ruben Ayers (penalty).

In an all State League One contest O'Connor Knights and ANU drew 1-1 and Premiership Belconnen United beat Burns Club, from the State League, 8-0.

Wollongong News

By Otto Bader



Community Bond — Wolves promotional visit south to the Shoalhaven district has won many new friends. The people came out in great numbers to Ison Park.

Nowra to watch the Wolves game against a local side.

After the BYE-Weekend it's back to business with the remaining four competition games to see the season out.

With several first graders off contract, now and not yet re-signed, coach Ron Corry could be tempted to test some young players ready to prepare for the 2002/2003 soccer season. It is foreseen that some experienced seniors will leave the Wolves taking up other offers, forcing the coaching staff to rebuild their squad.



Ron Corry: Will be using youngsters for the remainder of the season.

New Soccer Home — it is now official, NSW Premier Bob Carr announced a new technology precinct is to be built at Brandon Park, thus the past home of the Wolves gone for ever.

The soccer club has been promised compensation around \$2 million to move, considering the enormous amount of outfitting Brandon Park in past years by the Soccer Club. Wolves President Joe Cachia said the money would be used to establish a permanent home for the Wolves by developing Lysaght Sports @ Recreation Centre, recently purchased by some of the shareholders. At present, the Wolves are still contracted for three years to play at WIN Stadium but after that, the club will review their options. It would probably take that long to

manage the relocation move and overcoming the bureaucratic paper shuffling of Wollongong Council.

Soccer Australia Levy — plenty of discussion goes on to solve the financial problems of the ruling body. At this stage no local association — at least not Illawarra — have officially been advised.

Media reports about certain amounts suggested for junior and senior players circled. One would assume soccer Australia would mail correspondence with concrete proposals plus an audited financial statement of their own affairs to local soccer associations requesting support. Nothing of the sort has been done thus nobody has voted on a levy to impose. Surely no association worth its value would approve an additional levy — one \$ and later \$2 — have been paid over the last 20 or so years to Soccer Australia and or head office, now \$2.20 including GST — without seeing first a financial statement to view the present state of finances.

On the other hand the question must be asked why not approaching the wealthy NSW Soccer Federation (assets around \$5 million cash) or Northern NSW Soccer Federation Hunter-Newcastle (assets around \$15 to \$20 million) for assistance. The soccer fraternity is always ready to bail out the national body however not without researching other avenues and seeing a proper business plan from Soccer Australia. The handling of



Bob Carr: NSW Premier announced that a new technology precinct will be built over Brandon Park.



Joe Cachia: Wolves President will use the much needed funds to develop a permanent home for the Wolves.

soccer matters by the headmen does not look convincing at this stage.



Illawarra Soccer — Corral Leagues club knockout semi-finals resulted in Coniston Lions winning 2:1 against Bulli and Kemblawarra defeating Port Kembla 3:1.

Both games were well supported and produced good entertainment. Coniston met stiff resistance before striker Anthony Guido scored two goals in the second half, Shane Flack replying for Bulli. It was an open affair, opportunities created and missed. In the end last year's Grand Final winner Coniston advances to the Cup Final.

Kemblawarra scored three goals in the first half with Aaron O'Brien, Matthew Parker (2), assisted by turmoil in Port's defence line-up, the goal for Port from the penalty spot taken by Michael Clare. Kemblawarra's goalkeeper Mitchell Blowes was outstanding, preventing certain goals when Port dominated play in the second half. In the final analysis the more determined side advanced to the final.

Port Kembla, last year's Premier ship winners, known as slow starters, will meet next Bulli for third place while Coniston play Kemblawarra in the Cup Final, proudly sponsored for the last 40 years by the Corral Leagues club.

Soccer Illawarra Season Launch — at the Fraternity Club — a low-key affair — was a promotional success. More than 130 attended — each soccer club send 2 delegates, some more, plus 2 players required to model their home land "away" strips, much applauded.

Coach of the year Adrian Alston from the Port Kembla Soccer Club was interviewed with his wits severely challenged, never lost for words. Special guests welcomed were Wolves players and officials, sponsors, media people from local newspaper and WIN TV plus life members. Light supper and refreshments were provided.

All uniformed players had their photo taken. Afterwards all mingled socially creating a very friendly atmosphere. As an inaugural event the launch was well received and will most certainly be repeated for years to come.

Special Club Meeting — dealing with an appeal to restructure the two competitions, resulted in a — majority decision to run with 12 teams in Premier League and 16 teams in Conference League.

As to the new kick-off times voted in at last month AGM the opinions varied, obviously each club purely looking at their own situation, not interested in progress of soccer generally. The proposal submitted by the Fernhill Soccer

Club to set-up new kick-off times as to Reserve Grade — Youth Grade — First Grade should be given a chance, if it proves unworkable, changes can be proposed next season.

The Proposed 2002 Playing Calendar — scheduled to commence on Easter weekend Saturday 30th with round 1 in the Bert Bampton Cup — introduced 1973 in honour of long serving Board member/treasurer Bert Bampton. The 1973 winner was Berkeley, the 2001 winner Cringila Lions.

Competition Proper — kicks-off with round 1 on Saturday 6/4, in the ICU Premier League pairing West Illawarra v Port Kembla, Tarrawanna v Picton Rangers, Kemblawarra v Bulli, Kiama v Coniston Lions, Cringila v Lysaght and Wollongong Olympic v Balgownie Rangers.

ICU Conference League — kicks off also Saturday 6/4, with Fernhill v Albion Park White Eagles, Bellambi v Helensburgh, Berkeley v Highlands, Dapto v Northern United, Warrilla Wanderers v Shellharbour City, South Coast United v Ruse, Woonona v Shoalhaven City. After 15 rounds the competition is split into group 1 teams placed 1st to 6th, group 2 teams 7th placed, 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th, group 3 teams 8th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 16th — all playing 5 extra rounds — in total 20 rounds are being played, finishing on Saturday 24/8/02. After round 15 Reserve Grade and Youth Grade follow their first grade according to their group, regardless of their placing in the first rounds competition.

Albion Park White Eagles — placed 4th in a last year's Conference League is determined to do much better this soccer season.

Their home ground Terry Reserve Oval is well qualified for a Premier League venue. Changes in coaching staff last year was not beneficial for the team's performance. Newly appointed club coach Steve Micevski — a relative young player/coach — originates out of the club's pool of players, well conversant with the club set-up, has plenty of match experience as goalkeeper in higher grade of soccer.

He is working hard to win over players respect and has succeeded to sign most of last season's squad — newcomers signed are Robert Andreski, Ray Djuric plus youngsters Glen Moon and Andrew Last (goalkeeper). Assistant coach appointed is Zoran Jovanovski — an experienced former first grader in higher competition. Also assisting as goalkeeper coach is Tony Markovski — a past top performer in Premier League goalkeeper positions, long timekeeper of the successful Shellharbour Soccer club side years ago and a former Illawarra youth representative.

So far as enthusiasm is concerned, the club is on a winning formula. Dedicated Committee

members are at hand to support the young coach as well as maintain ground playing surface and facilities. A huge pool of junior soccer players of all age groups secures a constant supply of talent for senior grades. There is definitely a future in soccer to be seen at Albion Park White Eagles.

Coniston Lions — a regular Premier League competitor, placed last season 3rd, Grand Final winner 2001, Reserve Grade in 2nd spot, Youth Grade 9th — are now preparing for another challenge.

Milcho Saveski has been re-appointed as head coach, assistant coach Lube Televiski and Wolfgang Makawski — a well credited coaching staff. The club's home ground is J.J. Kelly Park, a well built playing venue, sponsor is Illawarra Steelers Club. Most of last year's squad is staying with the club, no big name players have been signed, rather bringing in youth grade talents. In doubt at present are top performers Vlado Sbrinovski (at the Wolves at the moment), Lawrence Seberry (not yet signed), left Coniston are Greg Saric and Dean Merola.

Their season launch has been booked for Saturday 23rd March at the Steelers Club, contact Bobby Grbevski on 0401 389 306 for admission tickets. Players will model the club's new playing strips. All supporters are invited to enjoy a good night of dining and entertainment.

Promotion Flyer Original — no doubt the ambitions of Shellharbour City Soccer Club and eager president Andy Campbell are unique in printing a commitment, leaflet dealing with developments — promote soccer — provide youth support for local clubs Oak Flats and Shellharbour Juniors — aims — ambitions — sponsorships — scholarships for aspiring youth — recruitment — professional coaching — survey local schools. Quite an impressive task to do, deserving success for the idea. Head coach Barney King — a former Illawarra highest goal scorer and national league striker — is collecting a bunch of experienced and talented youth players. Time will tell if all prospects can be realised, it might take a couple of years to reach the top league.

Junior Soccer Association — the next club meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20th March at Berkeley Sports club. This year's Soccer Gala Day will take place at Woonona Ocean Park on the weekend Saturday 6/4. A return trip to China for last year's u14's is planned on request from China, details available from the Administrative officer.

Referee Quiz — Do you know the answer? The referee plays an obvious advantage but when it does not eventuate, blows for a free kick within 3 seconds. (right/wrong).

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

Tim Cahill — The Truth



By Stuart Jones

Recently on an Australian soccer TV show a well-known Aussie soccer commentator stated that Tim Cahill was never picked for Australia.

Unfortunately this was not an accurate statement and it may have reflected poorly on Tim. ABSW caught up with Tim and set the record straight.

Tim Cahill's story is one of triumph in the face of adversity. Australia has not really known much about a player who has been one of the success stories of English football, yet like "Harry" he grew up in the western suburbs of Sydney. Actually Tim's story has been well documented in ABSW over the years.

Currently the attacking midfielder is a big part of Millwall's push into the Premier League. Millwall has been the surprise packet of Division One in the UK this year, pushing for a play off spot.

"We won promotion out of the second division last season and this season in the first we have really held our own. We would be very disappointed if we did not make the play offs from the position we are in at present. It was a step up from the second division but compared to the gulf between the first division and the Premier League the change to the first

division standard has been minimal.

I'd like to think the club is ready for the Premier League if we get promoted, after all many pundits said we were not ready to go up to the first division and look how well we have done this season.

Personally I have been one of the leading scorers out of midfield in the division and I would love to make the Division One team of the year.

Last season I was a part of the second division team of the year and what an honour it would be to make the first division side, looking at the players in the division."

"I really want to concentrate on making it into the Premiership. There have been offers before but I have never made the move and I

have had enquires about me from Premiership clubs but most have valued me around the 4 million pound mark where as Millwall value me at six million.

I just recently signed an improved new three-year deal so I am happy. There will always be speculation but I try and ignore it. If you get caught up in all that you can lose perspective and I like to keep my feet on the ground.

The perks in football are nice but you could always lose them just as quickly so you need to stay sensible about all the speculation in the media. You are really set up in the media and there are always people looking to shoot you down. So why get involved? I would rather stay focused on playing football

at the New Den. We are still close today, we speak to each other a couple of times a week. The newspapers love it over here and do the Aussie boys done good story about us both. Good on him for doing so well, I hope to join him in the Premiership soon."

So Tim Cahill concentrates on his league career whilst the media want to talk about his international dilemma. When Tim was 14 years old he played for Western Samoa (the nation his mother comes from) whilst visiting his sick Grandmother.

Unfortunately advice he received from Soccer Australia at the time led his advisers to believe it would not affect his international career. However as he played in an official FIFA qualifying



Mark McGhee: Millwall's manager very impressed with Cahill's performances.

when news came through that FIFA had rejected Australia's selection of Cahill. The irony is Western Samoa have stated in the past they don't want to stand in Tim's way in playing for another country. Both Raul Blanco and Frank Farina have been interested in gaining Tim's services and he was originally picked to take part in the 2000 Olympics.

To say that Tim was never picked, nor even considered, for Australia could be inferred by some as a shot at his love of this country. "I have always been interested in playing for Australia. It would be easier for me to go play for Ireland or Scotland. Mick McCarthy knew me at

Millwall and has approached me to play for Ireland, including their under 21's.

If I played for them then English clubs would be happier as it avoids the difficulties the Viduka's and Kewell's of this world have. However I have stayed hopeful of the fact that Australia would pick me and they finally did.

Once chosen things did not work out with FIFA and I am disappointed that more could not have been done by Soccer Australia to support my case. I have great agents in SFX and they are fighting very hard for me, as are many other people in London."

"As for the future,

Scotland and Ireland have approached me and if things get cleared up then I will have to consider their options. I am annoyed at the lack of support I have had at times from Soccer Australia but I still love Australia. If other nations fight for me more strongly (and Scotland would bust their guts to get me) then I must consider that but it does not make me unpatriotic, in the end I am an Aussie kid. I will continue to let my football do the talking and hopefully the right people will continue to take up my cause, hopefully including Soccer Australia."

Tim Cahill has been kicked from pillar to post by bumbling bureaucracy, often inside of Soccer Australia. It would not be unjust of him to turn around and ignore an invitation from Australia to play and yet he continues to want to play for his country of birth.

He came so close, selected and almost on the plane, one hopes Soccer Australia can do even more to push his cause so that we don't lose him to the likes of Scotland who would certainly push his case for him. But if SA do nothing and Scotland help him win a reprieve can Tim really be blamed for playing for them? The ball is truly in our court.

To the gentleman who said he had never been picked/considered for Australia — well the old adage of not letting facts get in the way of a good story may well be true.



Tim Cahill: Shown in action for Millwall against Wimbledon in a Nationwide First Division fixture.

really wanted to prove I could handle myself in the first division for a season.

Not just proving it to others, but proving to myself I could handle the game and I have done that. It has been news over here that Millwall

than get involved in all the speculation."

One thing that did occur this season was Tim lost one of his best mates to Blackburn. "Lucas Neill and I were always close as we spent so much time together

tournament, even at 14, it ruled him out of playing for anyone else the rest of his international career.

"Officials inside Soccer Australia said there would be no problem. At the end of the day it is down to FIFA but surely it is not right a 14 year old boy plays a game in an under 20 competition and has to play for them the rest of his career. My parents did not sign anything so how can it be binding? It is affecting my whole career. I saw it simply as a chance to go on holiday and visit my sick Grandmother. I never even expected to play as I did not go to any of the team meetings and only went to training twice. I'm getting punished for a mistake I made as a 14 year old thanks to poor advice."

So what of the claim he never got picked for Australia? When Raul Blanco was coach he actually flew to Britain and interviewed Tim. He got the wheels in motion and Tim was chosen to play for Australia.

In fact he and Lucas were almost boarding the plane



Tim Cahill: Australian born and bred, the 22-year-old has taken the English First Division by storm.



Celebrating one of his 13 goals so far this season for Millwall.

National Youth League

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2001-2002

NORTHERN DIVISION

RESULTS RD 23

Deferred Match from Rd 11 — Played on Wednesday 20 February

AIS 5 **ACTAS** 2
(Celeski 46, Richter 50, 90+ (Spaleta 59, Menser 69)
Wheelhouse 61, Valeri 90+)

FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2002

Wollongong Wolves Youth 2 **QAS** 3
(Sharland 20, Babic 72) (Hilton 30, Smits 44, 68)

SATURDAY 16 MARCH 2002

Marconi Stallions Youth 2 **AIS** 1
(Anabalon 14, 19) (Danze 88)

Sydney United Colts 0 **Olympic Sharks Youth** 8
(Hudap 19, Sarmonikas 33, 59, Moustakas 43, Tirovski 64, 84, Haliti 67, Skanavis 72)

SUNDAY 17 MARCH 2002

ACTAS 3 **Parramatta Power Youth** 2
(Ivanic 13, 89, Menser 90) (Biggins 28, Bridge 31)

Sydney United Youth 1 **Northern Spirit Youth** 2
(Orlovic 24) (Bateup 24, Fisher 88)

Brisbane Toro 5 **Marconi Stallions Colts** 0
(Pilic 4, Dreger 41, Fernandez 58, J. Fallini 88, 89)

NORTHERN DIVISION LEAGUE

LADDER - ROUND 23

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power Youth	23	17	0	6	74	28	51
Wollongong Wolves Youth	23	15	2	6	61	35	47
Marconi Stallions Youth	23	14	3	6	62	29	45
QAS	23	14	3	6	49	29	45
Sydney United Youth	23	14	2	7	56	24	44
AIS	24	14	1	9	59	36	43
Newcastle United Youth	23	13	3	7	52	38	42
Olympic Sharks Youth	24	10	6	8	51	33	36
ACTAS	23	10	3	10	43	59	33
Northern Spirit Youth	22	9	5	8	42	40	32
Brisbane Toro	23	8	0	15	43	70	24
NSWIS	26	4	3	19	24	73	15
Marconi Stallions Colts	23	2	2	19	15	68	8
Sydney United Colts	23	1	3	19	15	83	6

ROUND 24 FIXTURE

AIS Vs NSWIS 5.00pm - AIS Soccer Field
Newcastle United Youth Vs ACTAS 5.15pm - Energy Australia Stadium
Parramatta Power Youth Vs Sydney United Youth 5.00pm - Parramatta Stadium
QAS Vs Sydney United Colts 4.35pm - Ballymore Stadium
Northern Spirit Youth Vs Brisbane Toro 4.00pm - Christie Park
Olympic Sharks Youth Vs Marconi Stallions Youth 8.00pm - Toyota Park
Marconi Stallions Colts Vs Wollongong Wolves Youth 5.00pm - Marconi Stallions

LEADING SCORERS

Anabalon Eric	Marconi Stallions Youth	20
Danze Anthony	Australian Institute of Sport	18
Hilton Matt	Qld Academy of Sport	17
Kwasnik Adam	Parramatta Power Youth	15
Majurovski John	Newcastle United Youth	15
Santalab Brendan	Sydney United Youth	15
Timpano Jacob	NSW Institute of Sport	15
Rose Joshua	Brisbane Toro	13
Gavaghan Peter	Parramatta Power Youth	11
Babic Zeljko	Wollongong Wolves Youth	10



John Majurovski: Newcastle United Youths tar currently on 16 points.

SOCCER WOMAN BY JANENE MAR

Five Changes in Matildas Team for France

National Coach Adrian Santrac was forced to make changes to the 18-member Matildas Team announced last week for next month's international tournament in France against France, Canada, and Japan due to injury and unavailability.

Goalkeeper Sue Read, age 26, celebrates her first selection at senior international level, whilst four players, including three members of the Olympic Games squad, gain their recall after long absences from the international scene.

Olympians Amy Wilson and Bridgette Starr last took the field in the green and gold during the Sydney 2000 Olympics, whilst Olympic 'alternate' Amy Taylor's last game was in China in August 2000. Natalie Thomas makes her Matildas comeback after deciding to take a break from the game, last playing in the January 1999 Australia Cup.

Of the Australia Cup side of two months ago, Claire Nichols and Taryn

Rockall are sidelined through knee injuries, whilst Traci Bartlett and Cheryl Salisbury declared themselves unavailable. Also out of the reckoning were US professional league defender Dianne Alagich and Olympian Alicia Ferguson, at different stages of recovery from knee reconstruction surgery.



Anissa Tan: NSW Sapphires defender selected for the up and coming Matildas tour.

Missing out once again is Olympian Peita-Claire Hepperlin, whilst US-based Lisa Casagrande has been left out since the Australia Cup.

Four players who made their international debuts against South Korea - Rhian Davies, Cassandra Kell, Zoe Nolan, and Gill Thomson - have earned their second selection.

Santrac said, "We have a depleted squad, especially defensively, but that has provided an opportunity for other players to be selected and further their development as international players. However we will approach this in the same way we approach any tournament, by treating the



Natalie Thomas: Queensland Sting midfielder gaining her sixth cap for the Matildas.

opposition with the respect they deserve but with the aim of attempting to win the tournament."

The 'friendly' tournament presents the perfect opportunity to test players outside



Amy Taylor: Canberra Eclipse defender barking up for the Matildas after a grand final win with her side.

the core group within the international arena, and also to gauge Australia's recent progress.

Said Santrac, "These are all very strong nations in world women's football, who are playing regularly at international level and will prove very strong opposition with very different styles of play."

France, who placed sixth at last year's European Championship, are already known to Santrac. As Interim Coach, he led the Matildas to victory in the 2001 Australia Cup, undefeated in the three matches against the French.

Canada have beaten some of the best in the world since the 1999 World Cup under their champion Norwegian coach Even Pellerud, whilst Japan have the experience of three World Cups and an Olympics behind them.

The sixteen Australian-based team members plus the standby players assembled on Sunday for a twelve-day training camp at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, immediately preceding the touring group's departure for central France on Friday 29 March. The four-nation tournament kicks off on 3 April.

Australia's match schedule -

Wed 3 April	Australia v Canada	Poitiers
Sat 6 April	Japan v Australia	Angouleme
Tue 9 April	France v Australia	Limoges

THE MATILDAS INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT, FRANCE :

Player	Team	Hometown	Pos	DOB	Caps
Sharon BLACK	Fortuna Hjørring, Denmark	SA	M/F	04/04/71	58
Rhian DAVIES	Canberra Eclipse	Sydney	D	05/01/81	3
Alison FORMAN	Fortuna Hjørring, Denmark	NSW	M	17/03/69	74
Heather GARRIOCK	NSW Sapphires	Sydney	M/F	21/12/82	20
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	NSW Sapphires	Sydney	F	26/07/81	39
Cassandra KELL	NSW Sapphires	Gosford	GK	08/08/80	1
April MANN	Queensland Sting	Brisbane	F	21/04/78	6
Kate McSHEA	Queensland Sting	Brisbane	D/M	13/04/83	14
Zoe NOLAN	Queensland Sting	Hobart	D/M	08/06/79	1
Joanne PETERS	NSW Sapphires	Leeton	M	11/03/79	33
Sue READ	Canberra Eclipse	Canberra	GK	11/08/75	-
Bridgette STARR	Canberra Eclipse	Newcastle	D	10/12/75	50
Anissa TANN	NSW Sapphires	Sydney	D	10/10/67	94
Amy TAYLOR	Canberra Eclipse	Canberra	D	11/06/79	19
Natalie THOMAS	Queensland Sting	Broken Hill	M/F	03/05/78	5
Gill THOMSON	Canberra Eclipse	Sydney	M	28/08/76	3
Sacha WAINWRIGHT	Canberra Eclipse	Canberra	D	06/02/72	37
Amy WILSON	Canberra Eclipse	Canberra	M/F	09/06/80	27



Adrian Santrac: Matildas coach was forced to make five changes to his current squad bound for France.

Draw enough to see United and Bayern through while Juve crash out of Europe

Bayer Leverkusen	3
Juventus	1

Bayer Leverkusen goalkeeper Hans-Jorg Butt converted a penalty at the BayArena on Tuesday as the Bundesliga leaders sent a below-strength Juventus crashing out of the Champions' League.

Thomas Brdaric and Marko Babic were the other scorers while defender Igor Tudor was on target with a header



Leverkusen's Zoltan Sebestyen tackles Juve's Marcelo Zalayeta.

for the visitors, who were missing injured duo Alessandro Del Piero and Lilian Thuram, plus Edgar Davids through suspension.

But sent Gianluigi Buffon the wrong way on 24 minutes after Dimitar Berbatov's great pass had found Brdaric, who was brought down by Cristian Zenoni.

Berbatov was in imperious form and had to be denied by Conte from close-in just before the interval.

Substitute Tudor headed home a Christian Zenoni cross on 61 minutes to level - but the stalemate did not last.

A superb free-kick from Brazilian Ze Roberto found the head of Brdaric who nodded his side back in front, before Babic rounded off the success when Juventus were left open on the counter-attack as they pressed for another equaliser.

Real Madrid	3
Sparta Prague	0

Read Madrid's second string cruised to a comfortable 3-0 victory over an uninspired Sparta Prague side as the Spanish champions maintained their 100 per cent record in Group C.

Vicente del Bosque rested many of his first choice players as they meet Barcelona in Camp on Saturday, but he need not have worried.

Real never really needed to move out of first gear as their Czech opponents rarely ventured upfield and looked to have little fight in them. During a dismal first half Geremi came closest to opening the deadlock as he met Santiago Solari's cross to head wide of the left hand post.

Madrid rolled the ball around without forcing many openings and Sparta looked content to sit back and earn a draw.

But the introduction of Savio sparked life into the home side as the Brazilian set about reminding Del Bosque that he warrants a first team place more often.

Seven minutes after his arrival, he played a neat one-two with Solari and the Argentine midfielder delightfully chipped the ball over the approaching keeper.

On 64 minutes Guti scored when he

sidestepped his marker on the edge of the area before steering the ball back into the opposite corner. On 71 minutes the contest was over as Savio met Raul Bravo's high cross to head the ball home.

For long periods the game resembled a pre-season friendly as Madrid had already assured themselves of a place in the quarter-finals and the Czechs looked incapable of scoring.

Novotny did hit the crossbar when he lobbed Iker Casillas minutes before the end, but his dejected reaction summed up Sparta's night.

Porto	2
Panathinaikos	1

Porto beat Panathinaikos to leave the Greek side needing a draw at home to Real Madrid to ensure a place in the quarter-finals. Porto have to beat Sparta Prague to have a chance of progression.

Panathinaikos started the stronger in pouring rain, though Porto took the lead when Clayton crossed for Nuno Capucho to flick on for Deco to fire a first-time shot past Demis Nikopolidis.

Jorge Andrade almost doubled the lead soon after, but his header went wide.

Panathinaikos were forced into a double-substitution on 27 minutes when Robert Jarni and Michalis Katsaninou clashed heads. Emmanuel Olisadebe and Joonas Kolka came on.

Pena then saw an effort well-blocked by Nikopolidis while at the other end Nikos Liberopoulos had a goalbound effort stopped by Paulo Santos.

Pena then ended his goal drought, scoring for the first time since the beginning of November, by slotting home Capucho's cross from close range.

Paulo Santos saved well from Olisadebe before Kolka's drive from outside the area gave the visitors hope.

Goran Vlaovic boosted Panathinaikos' attacking options but saw a free-kick tipped onto the crossbar by the impressive Paulo Santos. The Greeks upped the pressure after Secretario was sent off but could still find no way through.

Arsenal	0
Dep. La Coruna	2

Deportivo la Coruna secured their place in the quarter-finals of the Champions' League as they comprehensively out-played Arsenal to win 2-0 thanks to goals from Juan Carlos Valeron and Nourredine Naybet.

To cap a miserable night for the Gunners, Thierry Henry missed a sec-



Arsenal's Thierry Henry missed penalty against Deportivo La Coruna.

ond half penalty.

Arsenal were already two behind when Fredrik Ljungberg, who had been on the field a matter of seconds, was brought down in the box by goalkeeper Francisco Molina.

Two minutes earlier, Diego Tristan hit the bar from a free-kick, and it seemed as though Arsenal, having ridden their luck, were about to force their way back into the game, as they sought to avoid their first European Cup defeat at Highbury since Benfica beat them in 1991.

But Henry's kick was saved by Molina, and, although Kanu bundled the ball over the line from the resulting corner, the goal was ruled out for pushing.

As they had against Bayer Leverkusen two weeks ago, Arsenal began brightly, Robert Pires having a shot well-saved by Molina and Dennis Bergkamp volleying just over within the first ten minutes.

But, unlike against the Germans, the early breakthrough didn't arrive, and Depor began to work their way back into the game.

Juan Carlos Valeron had already gone close, when he struck on the half-hour, firing home from Romero's pull-back after a rapid break. It could have been even worse for Arsenal seven minutes later, had not David Seaman made a superb save as Valeron met Diego Tristan's cross.

Depor, though, was not to be denied, and they doubled their lead after a spell of sustained pressure five minutes from half-time as Nourredine Naybet's shot deflected past Seaman off Igors Stepanovs.

Arsenal in truth, were comprehensively outplayed in the closing stages of the first half, and the suspicion was that Depor could have won by more had they not shut up shop after Henry's penalty miss.



Francesco Totti of AS Roma is tackled by Akman Ayhan of Galatasaray.

Roma	1
Galatasaray	1

Roma's hopes of reaching the quarter-finals of the Champions' League with one group match to spare were thwarted on Wednesday night when Fabio Capello's side stuttered to a draw against Galatasaray at the Stadio Olimpico.

Striker Umit Karan put GS ahead just before the break and Brazil right-back Cafu equalized for the Italians on 51 minutes.

Capello fielded the same side that demolished Lazio 5-1 at the weekend, with Vincenzo Montella lurking behind Marco Delvecchio and Francesco Totti.

The first chance went to Roma on seven minutes when Delvecchio latched onto a crossfield pass from Totti only to blast wide.

Cafu should have opened the scoring on 22 minutes when he nodded over from a Delvecchio cross.

The Turkish giants scored on 44 minutes when Umit Karan pounced on a poor clearance from Jonathan Zebina to dribble past Walter Samuel and finish clinically.

But Roma equalised soon after the restart when Cafu lobbed onrushing Colombian goalkeeper Farid Mondragon.

Totti was denied a penalty on 57 minutes and Francesco Antonioli was forced into action from an Ergun Pembe free kick but neither side fashioned the conclusive chances required to secure the victory in a bad tempered affair.

Barcelona	0
Liverpool	0



Liverpool's Emile Heskey jumps over Barcelona's goalkeeper Roberto Bonano.

Liverpool held on for a goalless draw in this Champions' League clash at the Nou Camp as Barca poured forward after the break.

Philippe Christanval hit the post with a header, while Rivaldo and Javier Saviola saw shots flash just wide.

Liverpool proved in the opening half that they had no intention of repeating last season's spoiling tactics in the Nou Camp. The Reds earned a 0-0 draw before taking a one-goal victory at Anfield in the Uefa Cup last term, but with their European future on the line, they were forced to attack.

Steven Gerrard missed a sitter at the far post on five minutes after moving in unmarked on to a John Arne Riise free-kick, while Barca threatened moments later when Frank de Boer's header from a corner just evaded Javier Saviola.

Gerrard nearly redeemed himself on nine minutes when his swept ball into the box allowed Emile Heskey to get in front of Philippe Christanval, but Roberto Bonano got down to save the England forward's low shot.

Gerrard was to the fore again on 23 minutes, rising highest at another set-piece - this one from Danny Murphy - but just failing to guide his header inside the post as Barca ball-watched.

The Catalans carved out their best chance of the first half on 35 minutes when Saviola escaped on the right of the Liverpool box and threaded a cross along the six-yard line, where Luis Enrique somehow let the ball slip off his toe and fly wide.

Saviola then got away on the other side of the area, only for Stephane Henchoz to deflect his goal-bound shot wide of the far post with goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek exposed.

Liverpool began the brighter after the break and Didi Hamann, booked earlier on to earn himself a suspension, threatened Bonano's goal with a 25-

yard drive that whistled narrowly over.

Saviola and Heskey had penalty appeals turned down as the atmosphere hotted up in the Nou Camp.

Then Heskey broke away down the inside-left channel and bore down on Bonano, who took advantage of a slightly heavy touch from the forward to block his prodded shot.

The game was swinging from end to end and Rivaldo was next to show, thrashing in a 30-yard effort from out on the right which Dudek could only watch just clear the angle.

Liverpool escaped again on 68 minutes when Saviola's cross was flicked goalwards by Christanval.

His header bounced back off the far post and straight to Philip Cocu, who looked to have a simple tap-in, but the Dutchman got the ball stuck under his feet just a yard from goal and saw it whipped off his toe.

Manchester Utd	0
Bayern Munich	0

A draw was enough for both sides to qualify for the quarter-finals of the Champions' League as Boavista failed to beat Nantes in the other Group A game on Wednesday.

The Old Trafford encounter rarely sparked to life with Ryan Giggs and Claudio Pizarro going closest to breaking the deadlock. Oliver Kahn was at full stretch to deny Giggs the opening goal early in the second period after a drab first half.

As the pressure built on the Bayern goal, Ruud van Nistelrooy was just too high with a header. But it was the visitors who then almost snatched the lead as Pizarro got his head onto a free-kick only to be denied low down by Fabien Barthez.

As the game suddenly sprang to life, Jens Jeremies had a long-range effort parried wide and Kahn stood up well to block from Van Nistelrooy, who was put through by David Beckham.

Stephan Effenberg's cross-shot was hacked clear with five minutes to go and Van Nistelrooy almost got in near the end but the game petered out into a draw.



Gary Neville is tackled by Paulo Sergio.

Giggs was involved the few dangerous moments in the first half. He was well policed for the most part by Hargreaves but the Welsh winger ended one twisting run with a shot wide off his weaker right foot.

United captain Roy Keane was lucky to escape a booking for a late challenge on opposite number Effenberg.

England midfielder Paul Scholes, who is one yellow card away from suspension, was left out of the United side, while the European champions dropped Brazilian star Giovane Elber to the bench.

Nantes	1
Boavista	1

Boavista crashed out of the Champions' League on Wednesday night when they were held by a disappointing Nantes side, who plainly lacked motivation for the match.

The French outfit went out themselves following their 5-1 hammering at Manchester United two weeks ago and this was a predictably scrappy spectacle as a result.

Boavista did not create their first chance until the 39th minute, when a poor punch from Nantes goalkeeper Mickael Landreau fell to Alexandre Goulart, whose volley rolled along the goal-line before being hacked to safety.

Moments later, Viorel Moldovan made no mistake for the hosts when Jorge Silva's clearance hit a team-mate and rolled straight into his path.

Nantes substitute Marama Vahirua nearly doubled the lead with his first touch a minute after the break, but the youngster's low left-foot effort from the edge of the box was pushed out by Ricardo.

Boavista began throwing more men into attack and created a decent opportunity when Erwin "Platini" Sanchez's drive from 12 yards forced Landreau to make a brave save on 58 minutes.

Nantes were creaking at the back, while their midfield began giving the ball away cheaply, and an equaliser promptly arrived, Martelinho providing the right-footed finish following an Emmanuel cross on 77 minutes.

As the match degenerated in the closing stages, large sections of the crowd began to jeer - and their mood grew darker still on 86 minutes when Fredric Da Rocha missed an open goal after Marama put him in.

Boavista could have grabbed all three points in injury-time, but following a Sanchez cross from the right, Duda missed a simple volley from six yards.

SECOND GROUP PHASE TABLES

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	5	2	3	0	10	3	9
Bayern Munich	5	2	3	0	3	1	9
Boavista	5	1	2	2	2	5	5
Nantes	5	0	2	3	3	9	2

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	5	1	4	0	6	3	7
Barcelona	5	1	3	1	6	7	6
Galatasaray	5	0	5	0	5	5	5
Liverpool	5	0	4	1	2	4	4

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	5	5	0	0	12	3	15
Panathinaikos	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
FC Porto	5	1	1	3	3	5	4
Sparta Prague	5	1	0	4	4	10	3

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
D. La Coruna	5	3	1	1	6	3	10
Arsenal	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
B. Leverkusen	5	2	1	2	8	10	7
Juventus	5	1	1	3	6	8	4

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

Did anyone ever say that a Lazio v Roma derby is boring? If so, think again and here is why. The recent Rome derby produced a lot of drama, both on and off the field. There was drama before, during and after the game.

Let's start with before. Two days before the game, Roma's President Franco Sensi accused his Lazio counterpart, Sergio Cragnotti, of not being a real Roman. Generally, the heart of the city follows Roma and the outer areas and surrounding region supports Lazio.

Sensi also added that Cragnotti was prepared to sell Alessandro Nesta, their captain and star Italian defender. Now Nesta is a Lazio icon having never played for any other club.

He went on to say that he would never sell his icon Francesco Totti. Totti, like Nesta, is an icon and captain of his team and has never played for any other club.

Furthermore, Sensi added that Totti would never want to leave. Just hours prior to the game the usual hoodlums, who masquerade as supporters, threw objects at the police and running street battles were conducted between them and the police. According to reports supporters of both sides were involved in the anti-social behaviour. Lazio's fans are of course not new to controversy.

Two years they protested very violently in the streets of Rome when they were convinced that the Italian Federation was making favourable decisions for Juventus. Also their notorious racist element is never far away from Rome's Olympic Stadium.

Now to the game itself - A Rome derby is always very emotional and it is arguably the most passionate derby in Italy.

However, who would have expected such a result? Roma absolutely crushed Lazio 5-1 and Vincenzo Montella was the destroyer.

Montella, the very talented striker who has sat out most of the season with injury, scored four goals against Lazio. Never had a player previously scored so many in a Rome derby. It was no ordinary feat.

Montella has only recently returned to the Roma line-up and he has picked up where he left off. Scoring goals that is.

He has now surely put himself back into calculations for a World Cup spot. It is funny how things have changed in the last year for Montella.

Last year he was still scoring goals, he ended up with 13 in the Serie A, but his relationship with coach Fabio Capello was at rock bottom. Capello was the coach who brought him to Rome, after he spent three previous seasons in the Serie A with Sampdoria.

Montella was upset at team selection throughout last season, as it was clear that Capello preferred the Gabriel Batistuta-Marco Delvecchio combination. Montella often started from the bench. Delvecchio though was sadly out of form last season, as he only managed to score three Serie A goals. But now all that has changed.

Delvecchio is playing a lot better and Montella is happy too. Batistuta is now the one for the bench with both the Italians starting ahead of him. Furthermore, it seems that there is no longer a problem between Capello and Montella; well at least that is what Montella claimed after the derby. What an interesting turn of events.

It is worth noting the tale of the two captains. Nesta had a nightmare of a game and was directly responsible for three goals. He was replaced during the game and later apologised to his supporters. Totti on the other hand scored Roma's fifth goal and what a goal it was. He was praised throughout Italy for his efforts.

Now to the aftermath. Two days after the convincing loss, Lazio supporters, perhaps the same ones from prior to the game, interrupted team training at their Formello headquarters. More objects were thrown and coach, Alberto Zaccheroni, was one of their main targets. Training was moved to an indoor gymnasium.

Zaccheroni only took over earlier this season as coach when Dino Zoff was sacked. It always is interesting to see who some fans see as responsible for poor results.

So it seems that Lazio could be finding themselves with a new coach for next year. Surprise surprise Roma could be in the same predicament but for very different reasons.

Capello is still associated with the Barcelona transfer rumours. President Sensi has stated that the club will not stand in his way.

So after all that drama, who would ever want to miss a Rome derby? To be continued next season.

Recoba double keeps Inter locked at the top with Roma

LECCE 0
INTER 2

Internazionale moved level again with Roma at the top of Serie A on Sunday when an Alvaro Recoba brace gave them victory at Lecce.

The Uruguay midfielder broke the deadlock on 39 minutes at a ground where Inter have lost just once, then extended the advantage from what looked an offside position midway through the second half to settle matters.

Davor Vruginec pulled one back for Lecce at the death after the same player earlier saw a penalty saved by Francesco Toldo.

ATALANTA 1
ROMA 3

Vincenzo Montella kept AS Roma at the top of the Serie A summit after a 3-1 win over

points for Juventus in a keenly-fought contest at the Delle Alpi stadium.

Inter beat lowly Lecce 2-1 after a double strike from Uruguayan forward Alvaro Recoba.

Goalkeeper Francesco Toldo saved a Davor Vruginec penalty although the Croatian scored a late consolation.

AC MILAN 2
TORINO 0

AC Milan closed the gap on its nearest rivals after its 2-1 victory over Torino at the San Siro.

The Rossoneri is sixth after a Massimo Ambrosini goal sealed the three points.

Earlier, Kakha Kaladze gave the home side the lead on 51 minutes before Torino's top marksman Marco Ferrante equalised from the penalty spot in the 62nd minute.

tion-threatened Brescia a share of the points.

FIorentina 1
BOlogna 1

They remain seven points behind fourth-placed Bologna, who could only draw with ailing Fiorentina at the Artemio Franchi.

Ezequiel Gonzalez gave the home side the lead in first-half injury-time, but Julio Cruz continued his recent resurgence in front of goal by levelling on 90 minutes.

The main talking point, though, was a serious blow to Bologna defender Giulio Falcone, who clashed with Gonzalez on 54 minutes and was stretchered off with a spinal injury.

PERUGIA 2
PARMA 1

Parma remain just two points above the drop-zone after going down at mid-table Perugia, who were 2-0 up by the half-hour through Vryzas and Bazzani.

Parma pulled one back on 64 minutes courtesy of Bonazzoli, but could not force a late leveller.

UDinese 1
PIACENZA 1

Udinese had Roberto Muzzi's spectacular overhead effort with just four minutes remaining to thank for its 1-1 home draw with Piacenza.

Carmine Gautieri gave Piacenza the advantage ten minutes before the interval but the send off of Francesco Statuto gave the home side the impetus needed to launch a final assault that culminated in Muzzi's wonder goal.



Vincenzo Montella scores his second goal in the 3-1 victory over Atalanta.

Atalanta at the Stadio Olimpico.

He opened the scoring on 17 minutes as he flicked home Assuncao's free kick.

The visiting side gifted the Romans a two-goal lead with Luciano Zauri unfortunately putting the ball past his own keeper on the half hour with Montella putting the pressure on him after some fine work by Roma starlet Antonio Cassano.

Montella added the Giallorossi's third in the 66th minute from a tight angle after Cassano - who replaced the injured Francesco Totti - flicked on Aldair's long ball.

Italian international midfielder Cristiano Doni grabbed yet another goal for Atalanta on 82 minutes but the consolation goal could not dampen the Roman joy.

JUVENTUS 1
VERONA 0

Pavel Nedved's 39th-minute goal, following a one-two with Nicola Amoruso, ensured three

CHIEVO 1
VENEZIA 1

Chievo has won just once in its last 11 Serie A games, but stayed fifth after a 1-1 draw with bottom club Venezia.

The visiting side led on seven minutes but a Eugenio Corini penalty on 62 minutes slaved a point for Chievo.

BRESCIA 1
LAZIO 1

Lazio's disappointing season continued, despite Argentine forward Hernan Crespo scoring his 100th Serie A goal against Brescia.

After being thrashed 5-1 by Roma last week, retreating to Brescia early after fans disrupted training and then having two players attacked on Saturday night, Lazio desperately needed a win but could only manage a 1-1 draw.

Crespo put the Romans ahead on 56 minutes but a last minute penalty from Roberto Yllana's gave relega-



AC Milan's Kaladze strides down the sideline against Torino.

This Week

March 24

Bologna v Lecce
Brescia v Perugia
Chievo v Verona
Internazionale v Roma
Lazio v Udinese
Parma v Juventus
Piacenza v AC Milan
Torino v Fiorentina
Venezia v Atalanta

Milan 2 Torino 1, Brescia 1 Lazio 1, Chievo 1 Venezia 1, Fiorentina 1 Bologna 1, Juventus 1 Verona 0, Lecce 1 Inter 2, Perugia 2 Parma 1, Udinese 1 Piacenza 1, Roma 3 Atalanta 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
1. Roma	27	15	11	1	43	17	56
2. Inter	27	16	8	3	48	24	56
3. Juventus	27	15	10	2	50	21	55
4. Bologna	27	13	6	8	31	27	45
5. Chievo	27	11	9	7	45	38	42
6. Milan	27	10	11	6	37	29	41
7. Lazio	27	9	10	8	36	28	37
8. Perugia	27	10	6	11	30	35	36
9. Verona	27	10	5	12	34	40	35
10. Torino	27	8	9	10	31	34	33
11. Atalanta	27	9	6	12	32	43	33
12. Piacenza	27	8	8	11	39	36	32
13. Parma	27	8	7	12	33	38	31
14. Udinese	27	8	7	12	35	42	31
15. Brescia	27	6	12	9	31	42	30
16. Lecce	27	5	9	13	27	41	24
17. Fiorentina	27	5	7	15	28	50	22
18. Venezia	27	3	7	17	25	50	16



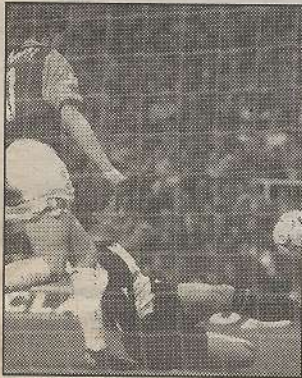
ENGLAND

Pires goal keeps United lead in check

WEST HAM UTD 3 MANCHESTER UTD 5

Manchester United made sure that Liverpool's stay at the top of the Premiership lasted only three hours as they twice came from behind to defeat West Ham United 5-3.

The Londoners shocked United on eight minutes when Stuart Lomas, back in the side after injury, blazed his first goal for nearly 18 months past Fabien Barthez.



United's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scores as West Ham's Sebastian Schettel looks on.

David Beckham restored parity with an exquisite chip on 17 minutes against the run of play, before Frederic Kanoute side-footed home a Sebastian Schettel cross to make it 2-1 to the Hammers.

Once again, though, they could not hang on and Nicky Butt powered home a Beckham centre to tie matters up with only 22 minutes on the clock.

It was all United after the break and Paul Scholes cracked in from an Ole Gunnar Solskjaer pass on 54 minutes before the Norwegian himself scrambled home a fourth goal midway through the half.

West Ham top scorer Jermain Defoe reduced the deficit on 78 minutes, but the visitors clung on, then scored a fifth goal from the spot through Beckham in the closing seconds to move two points clear at the Premiership summit.

NEWCASTLE UTD 2 IPSWICH TOWN 2

The shock of the day looked on at St James' Park, where Ipswich Town were within two minutes of breaking a four-game losing streak with a win against high-flying Newcastle United.

Marcus Bent rolled the ball through Shay Given's legs on 48 minutes to give the Suffolk side the lead, but a free-kick from Laurent Robert screamed into the top corner to make it one apiece and the Toon Army expected their side to kick on.

To their dismay, though, defender Nikos Dabizas kicked a clearance straight at team-mate Andy O'Brien and Bent took advantage once more.

Newcastle piled forward in search of a leveller, but looked certain to fail until Robert curled a centre on to

Alan Shearer's head and the ex-England man made it 2-2. He then missed the chance to win it in injury-time - blazing wastefully wide from the spot.

MIDDLESBROUGH 0 LIVERPOOL 2

Goals from Emile Heskey and John Arne Riise in the noon kick-off gave Liverpool victory over Middlesbrough and temporarily moved the Reds to the top of the Premiership.

Liverpool owed their first goal on 33 minutes to man-of-the-match Nicolas Anelka, who just kept the ball in on the left touchline before making a powerful run towards goal.

His cross picked out German midfielder Didi Hamann, whose shot was redirected to Heskey for a straightforward finish into the roof of the net.

Paul Ince twice went close for Boro with long-range efforts before Heskey laid in Riise on 84 minutes and the Norwegian made no mistake with a low drive into the corner.

Gareth Southgate surged forward for the home side and pulled one back in the 89th minute when Stephane Henchoz and Jerzy Dudek waited in vain for each other to attack a right-wing cross.

CHELSEA 4 SUNDERLAND 0

Chelsea moved to within three points of fourth-placed Newcastle with another high-scoring win - this time over fading Sunderland.

William Gallas tapped in a Marcel Desailly knockdown from a corner on 24 minutes to put the Blues ahead, but they then struggled to break down a stubborn visiting side until late in the second half.

With 17 minutes left, Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Jesper Grønkjær combined to set up Eidur Gudjohnsen for a neat finish, then Mikael Forsell smashed home from 20 yards and Sam Dalla Bona completed the rout in injury-time.

BOLTON WAN. 1 DERBY COUNTY 3

At the other end of the table, Derby County gained a price-less win over fellow relegation candidates Bolton Wanderers.

Malcolm Christie opened the scoring for John Gregory's side on 22 minutes to silence the Reebok Stadium, but a drive from Ricardo Gardner tied matters up at the start of the second half.

Derby always looked the classier side, however, and Fabrizio Ravanelli restored their advantage with a deft header from a left-wing cross, then Danny Higginbotham made it 3-1 from the spot after a professional foul on Lee Morris.

EVERTON 2 FULHAM 1

David Moyes made a dream start as Everton manager, but his side were were made to hang on against Fulham after David Unsworth's first-half dismissal.

Unsworth put the Blues in front on 32 seconds and the Goodison faithful were in raptures on 13 minutes when goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar gifted No 2 to Duncan Ferguson.

But it was a different story after the red card and Steed Malbranque reduced the deficit when he turned in Barry Hayles' cross on 52 minutes to set up a nervy last half-hour.

SOUTHAMPTON 2 LEICESTER CITY 2

Rock-bottom Leicester City raced into a 2-0 lead against Southampton at St Mary's with a Brian Deane double, but Marian Pahars pulled one back from Anders Svensson's cross on the half-hour and the little Latvian drew his side level from the spot in the closing stages.

ASTON VILLA 1 ARSENAL 2

Arsenal moved to within a point of leaders Manchester United with a 2-1 English Premiership victory away to Aston Villa on Sunday.

Arsenal took the lead following a controversial free-kick with Hassan Kachoul harshly adjudged to have brought down Edu 25 yards out.

Dennis Bergkamp rolled the ball to Sylvain Wiltord and the Frenchman's shot proved too hot for Schmeichel to hold.

The Denmark great recovered quickly to block Patrick Vieira's follow-up but could do nothing about Brazilian Edu's effort from 12 yards.

Then, on the hour mark, Pires struck after Freddie Ljunberg found him with a raking cross-field pass.

Pires flicked the ball inside George Boateng and then calmly lobbed the giant Schmeichel for one of the goals of the season.

But nine minutes later Villa were back in the match when Dublin, a half-time substitute, headed home a cross from Moroccan international Mustapha Hadji.

LEEDS UNITED 3 BLACKBURN 1

Leeds United revived their Champions League hopes with a 3-1 win over Blackburn at Elland Road.



Tomasz Radzinski of Everton and Andy Melville of Bolton fight it out.

A quick-fire first-half double from Robbie Fowler put Leeds 2-0 up inside eight minutes and Harry Kewell's second-half strike set the seal on a result which gave their Irish manager David O'Leary an ideal St Patrick's Day present.

Fowler opened the scoring in the fifth minute. A poor pass from Tugay saw the England striker beat Hakan Unsal to the loose ball before he slid the ball under onrushing former Liverpool keeper Brad Friedel.

And just over two minutes after his first, Fowler had netted his second.

Alan Smith's superb left-wing cross evaded the Blackburn defence and ace poacher Fowler was on hand to stab home from the edge of the six-yard box.

Leeds made sure of three points with 19 minutes remaining. Robbie Keane found Kewell and the Australia ace let fly from 20 yards for his first goal in three months.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa 1 Arsenal 2, Leeds United 3 Blackburn Rovers 1, Bolton Wanderers 1 Derby County 3, Chelsea 4 Sunderland 0, Everton 2 Fulham 1, Southampton 2 Leicester City 2, West Ham United 3 Manchester Utd 5, Newcastle United 2 Ipswich Town 2, Middlesbrough 1 Liverpool 2, Tottenham Hotspur v Charlton Athletic.

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pts
1. Manchester Utd	31	20	4	7	78-40	64
2. Arsenal	30	18	9	3	60-32	63
3. Liverpool	31	18	8	5	52-26	62
4. Newcastle United	30	17	5	8	54-40	56
5. Chelsea	30	14	11	5	58-30	53
6. Leeds United	30	13	12	5	42-30	51
7. Aston Villa	30	10	11	9	35-36	41
8. Charlton Athletic	29	9	11	9	33-34	38
9. Tottenham Hotspur	29	11	5	13	39-44	38
10. West Ham United	30	10	7	13	35-49	37
11. Southampton	30	10	6	14	37-45	36
12. Fulham	30	8	11	11	30-36	35
13. Middlesbrough	30	9	8	13	29-38	35
14. Sunderland	30	9	7	14	23-37	34
15. Everton	30	8	9	13	29-36	33
16. Blackburn Rovers	30	8	8	14	39-41	32
17. Ipswich Town	30	8	7	15	38-49	31
18. Bolton Wanderers	30	6	12	12	32-47	30
19. Derby County	30	8	5	17	26-47	29
20. Leicester City	30	3	10	17	21-53	19

FIRST DIVISION

Burnley 2 Preston 1, Crewe 1 Portsmouth 1, Gillingham 3 Nottm Forest 1, Man City 1 Crystal Palace 0, Millwall 1 Sheff Wed 2, Rotherham 1 Bradford 1, Walsall 2 Barnsley 1, Watford 3 Coventry 0, Wimbledon 3 Stockport 1, Wolverhampton 0 Grimsby 1, Norwich 0 Birmingham 1.

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1. Man City	39	26	5	8	44	83
2. Wolverhampton Wan.	40	23	9	8	34	78
3. West Bromwich Albion	38	20	7	11	19	67
4. Burnley	39	19	10	10	11	67
5. Coventry City	40	20	5	15	14	65
6. Millwall	39	18	10	11	16	64
7. Birmingham City	39	18	9	12	13	63
8. Preston	39	16	11	12	6	59
9. Wimbledon	39	15	13	11	9	58
10. Crystal Palace	40	18	4	18	7	58
11. Norwich	39	17	7	15	2	58
12. Watford	40	15	10	15	12	55
13. Gillingham	39	15	9	15	-1	54
14. Nottm Forest	40	11	17	12	3	50
15. Sheff Utd	38	12	14	12	-1	50
16. Portsmouth	40	13	11	16	-7	50
17. Bradford City	39	13	7	19	-8	46
18. Rotherham Utd	40	10	15	15	-11	45
19. Sheff Wed	40	11	11	18	-19	44
20. Crewe Alexandra	36	11	9	16	-21	42
21. Grimsby Town	40	10	12	18	-22	42
22. Walsall	40	10	10	20	-21	40
23. Barnsley	40	8	15	17	-23	39
24. Stockport	39	3	8	28	-56	17

SECOND DIVISION

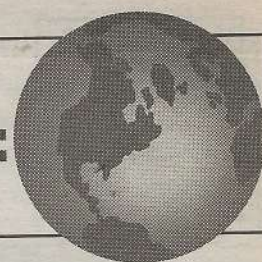
Blackpool 4 Port Vale 0, Brentford 1 Wycombe 0, Brighton 2 Bury 1, Cambridge United 0 Huddersfield 1, Chesterfield 0 Reading 2, Colchester 3 QPR 1, Northampton 4 Wrexham 1, Notts County 2 Bristol City 0, Oldham 1 Cardiff 7, Stoke 1 Peterborough 0, Swindon 1 Wigan 1, Tranmere 0 Bournemouth 0.

	P	W	D	L	G	D	Pts
1. Reading	40	23	9	8	60	33	78
2. Brighton	40	21	13	6	56	38	76
3. Brentford	40	21	9	10	69	39	72
4. Stoke	40	20	10	10	61	36	70
5. Huddersfield	39	19	12	8	57	38	69
6. Bristol City	39	19	8	12	56	39	65
7. Cardiff	39	17	13	9	63	45	64
8. Oldham	40	16	13	11	69	58	61
9. Tranmere	39	15	14	10	55	44	59
10. QPR	40	15	13	12	52	44	58
11. Wycombe	40	15	11	14	51	55	56
12. Wigan	40	13	15	12	56	44	54
13. Port Vale	40	15	8	17	48	57	53
14. Swindon	40	13	12	15	42	51	51
15. Blackpool	40	12	14	14	56	61	50
16. Colchester	40	13	10	17	58	68	49
17. Chesterfield	39	11	13	15	46	51	46
18. Peterborough	39	12	9	18	52	51	45
19. Northampton	40	12	5	23	47	71	41
20. Notts County	40	10	10	20	49	63	40
21. Bury	40	10	10	20	38	66	40
22. Bournemouth	39	9	12	18	49	60	39
23. Wrexham	40	9	9	22	46	80	36
24. Cambridge Utd	39	5	10	24	34	78	25

THIS WEEK IN PREMIERSHIP

(SATURDAY, MARCH 23)

Arsenal v West Ham Utd
Charlton Athletic v Bolton Wanderers
Derby County v Everton
Ipswich Town v Aston Villa
Leicester City v Leeds United
Man Utd v Middlesbrough
Sunderland v Southampton
Blackburn Rovers v Newcastle United
Sun Mar 24 2002 Liverpool v Chelsea
Fulham v Tottenham Hotspur



Barca-Real derby ends in a draw, while Valencia lose at Vallecano

Real Madrid drew 1-1 with Barcelona at the Nou Camp stadium on Saturday meaning they will have to wait another season before contemplating another bid to end their barren streak at the famous venue.

Real got their reward for making the early running after 38 minutes when world record transfer signing Zinedine Zidane found the net to give them the lead.

Zidane has scored seven league goals this season but none will be treasured as much as this one, against Real's bitter rivals.

Raul Gonzalez picked up the ball in the area and found the space to slot it through three Barcelona

defenders and the Frenchman was on hand, and unmarked, to sidefoot the ball into the net.

Barcelona got back on level terms in slightly bizarre fashion just before the hour.

Xavi Hernandez unleashed a low and hard shot from 25 metres which Real goalkeeper Cesar Sanchez failed to keep under control.

The ball squirmed out of his grasp and looped backwards over his head and into the goal, chased by the despairing Cesar.

The draw benefited the cause of Deportivo La Coruna, who moved up to third with 51 points, after their 3-1 victory at Osasuna.

Deportivo's Diego Tristan showed why he is one of the deadliest attackers in Europe at the moment, as he notched up a hat-trick in barely 30 minutes.

Tristan was the scourge of Real Madrid 10 days ago as Deportivo lifted the Spanish Cup, and took just five minutes to get his first goal, after he had latched on to a Lionel Scaloni pass.

His second strike came 13 minutes later from a brilliant individual effort, and his third was fired home from the penalty spot after 32 minutes, after Osasuna defender Josetxo Urtasun had brought down Juan Carlos Vieron in the box.

Tristan's triple took his goal tally for the season to 15.

However, Deportivo noticeably stepped off the gas in the second half with all three points in the



Barcelona's Patrick Kluivert tussles with Real's Zinedine Zidane.

bag and Osasuna got a consolation goal a minute from the whistle.

Deportivo's Hector Berenguer del Pino fouled Gerardo Rivero in the area and Australian striker John Aloisi converted the resulting penalty.

Rayo Vallecano moved off the bottom of the table as they inflicted a surprise 2-1 defeat on Valencia, who remain second behind Real Madrid.

Miguel Angel Angulo put Valencia ahead against the run of play on 28 minutes, but, just as el Che seemed to be taking control they were pegged back as Mauricio Pellegrino headed through his own goal.

Sergio Corino headed the winner for the home side on 58 minutes, rising unchallenged in the box to power home Michel's corner.

Athletic Bilbao produced a remarkable performance on Sunday when they came from two goals down to beat eight-man Alaves in the Basque Country derby at the Mendizorzoa.

Magno Mocelin, Ruben Navarro and Oscar Tellez were shown red cards as Alaves' violent display eventually cost them three points.

Jordi Cruyff netted after five and 12 minutes for the home side, but strikes from Tiko and Ismael Urzaiz before the break, after Magno and Navarro had been dismissed, pulled Bilbao back into the match.

The only goal after the interval came from the spot when Aitor Larrazabal stroked the ball home with 15 minutes remaining, before Tellez became Alaves' third man to be ordered off.

Darko Kovacevic proved how much he is revelling in life after John Toshack by hitting the winner in Real Sociedad's 1-0 victory over Espanyol.

Toshack was replaced by Robert Obade last weekend and Kovacevic expressed his delight at the Welshman's dismissal, claiming: "Now we take training seriously."

Las Palmas put up a brave fight to come back from two goals down, only for Celta Vigo to snatch the points 13 minutes from time in the Balaidos.

Catania and Alexander Mostovoi gave the home side the lead before the break, but the Canary Islanders regrouped and Orlando and Paqui

pulled them level.

Valery Karpin then put Celta 3-2 ahead as the Galicians continued their push for a Champions' League place and condemned Las Palmas to another pointless outing.

Villarreal earned a valuable point courtesy of two late goals in a 2-2 draw with Real Valladolid in El Madrigal.

Fernando put the visitors ahead from the spot after nine minutes before Luis Garcia doubled the advantage.

With only eight minutes left, Valladolid looked to be comfortable winners, but Javier Calleja pulled Villarreal back into the game and Rodolfo Arruabarrena scored the equaliser four minutes later.

At the other end of the table, Real Betis missed the chance to close the gap on Real Madrid as they drew 1-1 with Real Zaragoza.

Bilic put Zaragoza ahead in La Romareda just before the half-hour and it took the Andalucians until midway through the second period to earn a point when Dani equalised.

Tenerife and Mallorca produced a typical relegation battle in the Heliodoro Rodriguez Lopez, but failed to break the deadlock as the game ended 0-0.

Mallorca will welcome the point as they extend their unbeaten run to three games, while Javier Clemente remains unbeaten after four games in charge of Tenerife.

THIS WEEK

MARCH 24, 2002

Athletic Bilbao v Celta Vigo
Deportivo La Coruna v Tenerife
Espanyol v Alaves
Las Palmas v Villarreal
Malaga v Rayo Vallecano
Real Betis v Seville
Real Madrid v Real Zaragoza
Real Mallorca v Real Sociedad
Real Valladolid v Barcelona
Valencia v Osasuna

WORLD LEAGUES

DUTCH EREDIVISIE

Feyenoord 3 Den Bosch 0, Vitesse 0 PSV 0, Twente 0 Groningen 1, RKC 2 NEC 1, Utrecht 3 Fortuna 0, Ajax 2 Heerenveen 0, AZ 2 De Graafschap 1, Willem II 4 Sparta 0, Roda 1 NAC 1

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pt
1 Ajax	27	17	6	4	58-27	57
2 Feyenoord	26	16	4	6	57-22	52
3 PSV	26	15	5	6	57-27	50
4 Heerenveen	26	14	6	6	46-19	48
5 Vitesse	27	12	10	5	31-25	46
6 NAC	27	13	6	8	46-41	45
7 Utrecht	27	11	7	9	52-44	40
8 RKC	27	11	5	11	36-33	38
9 NEC	27	10	5	12	28-43	35
10 Willem II	27	8	10	9	43-46	34
11 AZ	27	9	5	13	32-38	32
12 Groningen	27	9	5	13	33-48	32
13 Twente	27	7	10	10	33-35	31
14 Den Bosch	27	7	9	11	34-43	30
15 Roda	27	8	5	14	26-42	29
16 De Graafschap	26	8	4	14	34-45	28
17 Sparta	27	4	11	12	26-57	23

BELGIAN EERSTEKLASSE

Aalst 1 Brugge 1, Sint-Truiden 4 Beveren 2, RWDM 2 Antwerp 0, Lommel 1 Genk 5, Gent 2 Lierse 3, Germinal 1 Westerlo 1, Mouscron 4 Lokeren 0, Standart 1 La Louviere 2, Charleroi 1 Anderlecht 1

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pnt
1 Brugge	27	19	2	6	64-33	59
2 Genk	26	16	9	1	72-34	57
3 Anderlecht	26	15	8	3	59-28	53
4 Mouscron	27	14	4	9	58-32	46
5 Standart	26	13	7	6	48-31	46
6 Gent	27	12	8	7	47-41	44
7 Lokeren	27	12	7	8	35-29	43
8 Sint-Truiden	27	12	4	11	40-38	40
9 Germinal	26	8	11	7	49-39	35
10 RWDM	27	10	4	13	37-46	34
11 Charleroi	27	9	6	12	31-47	33
12 Lommel	27	8	7	12	42-50	31
13 Westerlo	27	8	6	13	43-50	30
14 La Louviere	27	7	8	12	32-50	29
15 Lierse	27	7	7	13	43-52	28
16 Antwerp	27	5	8	14	35-54	23
17 Aalst	27	4	6	17	21-58	18
18 Beveren	27	2	8	17	29-73	14

FRENCH CHAMPIONAT

Bordeaux 2 Lens 1, Auxerre 3 Metz 2, Sochaux 1 Guingamp 0, Lorient 0 Bastia 0, Monaco 1 Nantes 2, Montpellier 0 Sedan 0, Lille 2 Olympique (L) 0, Paris Saint Germain 3 Troyes 1, Rennais 2 Olympique (M) 1

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pnt
1 Lens	29	17	8	4	48-22	59
2 Olympique (L)	29	16	5	8	55-31	53
3 Paris Saint Germain	29	13	12	4	39-21	51
4 Auxerre	27	14	9	4	37-25	51
5 Lille	29	14	9	6	35-24	51
6 Bordeaux	29	13	8	8	30-23	47
7 Troyes	29	11	6	12	35-34	39
8 Sochaux	29	10	9	10	35-36	39
9 Monaco	29	9	8	12	31-33	35
10 Montpellier	29	7	12	10	23-26	33
11 Olympique (M)	28	8	9	11	26-33	33
12 Nantes	29	9	6	14	27-35	33
13 Sedan	27	7	11	9	27-29	32
14 Bastia	29	9	5	15	29-38	32
15 Rennais	29	8	8	13	30-43	32
16 Guingamp	29	7	8	14	29-49	29
17 Lorient	29	7	7	15	39-56	28
18 Metz	28	7	4	17	21-38	25



Rayo Vallecano's Pablo Sanz and Valencia's Amadeo Carboni tussle for the ball.

Rayo Vallecano 2 Valencia 1, Tenerife 0 Mallorca 0, Villarreal 2 Valladolid 2, Sevilla 0 Malaga 2, Real Sociedad 1 Espanyol 0, Alaves 2 Athletic 3, Celta 3 Las Palmas 2, Zaragoza 1 Betis 1, Barcelona 1 Real 1, Osasuna 1 Deportivo 3.

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pt
1 Real	30	15	8	7	57-32	53
2 Valencia	30	14	11	5	36-24	53
3 Deportivo	30	15	6	9	45-35	51
4 Betis	30	13	11	6	35-26	50
5 Celta	30	12	12	6	50-36	48
6 Athletic	30	13	9	8	43-43	48
7 Barcelona	30	13	8	9	49-29	47
8 Alaves	30	13	3	14	31-32	42
9 Malaga	30	10	11	9	35-37	41
10 Espanyol	30	11	8	11	37-42	41
11 Valladolid	30	11	7	12	35-48	40
12 Sevilla	30	10	8	12	43-36	38
13 Mallorca	30	9	7	14	34-39	34
14 Villarreal	30	8	10	12	32-38	34
15 Osasuna	30	8	10	12	28-39	34
16 Real Sociedad	30	9	6	15	36-43	33
17 Las Palmas	30	8	9	13	31-38	33
18 Zaragoza	30	9	6	15	28-42	33
19 Rayo Vallecano	30	8	8	14	36-47	32
20 Tenerife	30	8	8	14	24-39	32

SCOTTISH LEAGUE

CELTIC STRENGTHEN GRIP ON TITLE

Stilian Petrov grabbed his second goal in two games to give Celtic FC victory against Dundee United FC as the champions clasped another finger around the Scottish Premier League title trophy.

The Bulgarian international, Celtic's scorer in the 1-1 draw with Rangers FC last week, struck again today - finishing neatly on 41 minutes after a Henrik Larsson pass - as Martin O'Neill's side moved to within two victories of retaining the title and their first back-to-back championships in 20 years. Celtic have 87 points, while Rangers - who face Ayr United LFC in tomorrow's Scottish League Cup final - have 74.

A Temuri Ketsbaia-inspired Dundee FC swept aside Motherwell FC 2-0 with a superb first-half display. The Georgian struck with two long-range efforts against a disappointing Motherwell side.

A sixth-minute winner from new signing Leon Mike continued Aberdeen FC's challenge for European football next year. Mike, recently acquired from Manchester City FC, had an



Celtic's Henrik Larsson shoots at the Dundee United goal.

impressive outing in his first start as Aberdeen took a deserved three points against Dunfermline Athletic FC. Aberdeen are two points above Livingston FC in third place.

Livingston ended a four-match run of defeats to share a 1-1 draw with Kilmarnock FC. Barry Wilson gave Jim Leishman's side a 22nd-minute lead but an opportunist Craig Dargo strike drew Kilmarnock level nine minutes before the break.

In the Edinburgh derby, meanwhile, a Steven Pressley penalty two minutes from time - awarded for Gary Caldwell's foul on Ricardo Fuller - secured all three points for Heart of Midlothian FC. Hibernian FC had taken the lead after just four minutes through Garry O'Connor, but Scott Severin drew Hearts level shortly before half-time. The defeat brings an end to Hibs manager Bobby Williamson's 100 per cent record since taking charge at Easter Road.

Hibernian 1 Hearts 2, Kilmarnock 1 Livingston 1, Aberdeen 1 Dunfermline 0, Celtic 1 Dundee United 0, Dundee 2 Motherwell 0

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pt
1 Celtic	32	28	3	1	74-15	87
2 Rangers	32	22	8	2	70-23	74
3 Aberdeen	32	15	5	12	46-43	50
4 Livingston	32	13	9	10	40-35	48
5 Hearts	32	12	6	14	43-43	42
6 Kilmarnock	32	11	9	12	37-41	42
7 Dunfermline	32	11	7	14	37-52	40
8 Dundee	32	10	7	15	35-48	37
9 Dundee United	32	9	8	15	31-54	35
10 Motherwell	32	9	6	17	42-57	33
11 Hibernian	32	7	10	15	41-50	31
12 St. Johnstone	32	4	4	24	20-55	16

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

LEVERKUSEN ADVANCE TOWARD TITLE, AS DORTMUND KEEP HOPES ALIVE



Timo Hildebrand (goalkeeper) challenges Thomas Brdaric of Bayer Leverkusen.

Four goals in six minutes fired Borussia Dortmund to a 5-1 win thrashing of lowly Freiburg on Sunday to keep their title ambitions alive. They now trail leaders Leverkusen by a single point.

Freiburg took the lead from Levan Kobiashvili's early free-kick, but Dortmund immediately hit back through Evanilson.

Dortmund keeper Jens Lehmann was then lucky not to concede a penalty and be sent off for a kick on Soumaila Coulibaly that the referee missed.

The match remained level until 64 minutes when Dede put Dortmund ahead with a left-foot strike.

That proved the turning point as within six minutes Marcio Amoroso and Jan Koller (twice) had also scored to seal victory.

Elsewhere, Schalke 04 moved back into fourth spot after Ebbe Sand's late header had earned them a deserved 2-1 win away to 1860 Munich. Earlier, Paul Agostino had cancelled out Gerald Asamoah's third-minute opener.

Bayer Leverkusen moved a step closer to the Bundesliga title with a 2-0 win on Saturday while Bayern Munich could only draw.

A 2-0 win away at VfB Stuttgart has put Leverkusen four points clear of BV Borussia Dortmund at the top of the German table and on target for their first ever championship. Thomas Brdaric put the visitors ahead at the Gottlieb-Daimler-Stadion after 40 minutes with a shot from close range, and his striking partner Dimitar Berbatov wrapped up the points moments before the half-time whistle with a fine volley.

Leverkusen were less impressive in the second half but their victory was all but assured once Stuttgart defender Marcelo Bordon had been dismissed after 79 minutes for a second bookable offence. It was the leaders' first away win in four months - a timely boost ahead of their vital visit to RC Deportivo La Coruña in the UEFA Champions League next week.

Bayern's chances, meanwhile, took a blow on Saturday as they were held to a 0-0 draw away at FC Kaiserslautern. The German and European champions had several opportunities to continue their recent good run but failed to take full advantage, even when their hosts had Greek midfielder player Dimitrios Grammos dismissed for a second bookable offence with 12 minutes to go. Indeed they had goalkeeper Oliver Kahn to thank after he saved a 12th-minute penalty from Bayern old boy Mario Basler.

Bayern are now just two points ahead of in-form Hertha BSC Berlin, whose Brazilian striker Alex Alves scored twice in a 3-0 win at SV Werder Bremen to lift them up to fourth in the table where they are level on points with fifth-placed Kaiserslautern.

In Saturday's other games, rock-bottom FC Koln enhanced their chances of surviving relegation as they came back from two goals down to secure a 4-2 win against FC Hansa Rostock, but FC Nürnberg remain in trouble after they were beaten 1-0 by VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach.

FC St. Pauli are also in deep trouble after a humiliating 4-0 defeat away at FC Energie Cottbus, while in the final game of the day, north German rivals Hamburger SV and VfL Wolfsburg shared the honours in a 1-1 draw at the AOL Arena.

Freiburg 1 Borussia (D) 5, 1860 Munchen 1 Schalke 04 2, Cologne 4 Hansa 2, Stuttgart 0 Bayer 2, Kaiserslautern 0 Bayern 0, Hamburger 1 Wolfsburg 1, Werder 0 Hertha 3, Borussia (M) 1 Nürnberg 0, Energie 4 St. Pauli 0

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pt
1 Celtic	32	28	3	1	74-15	87
1 Bayer	27	17	5	5	63-31	56
2 Borussia (D)	27	16	7	4	47-23	55
3 Bayern	27	15	6	6	51-20	51
4 Schalke 04	27	15	6	6	43-27	51
5 Hertha	27	14	7	6	51-29	49
6 Kaiserslautern	27	15	4	8	50-38	49
7 Werder	27	13	4	10	39-31	43
8 1860 Munchen	27	12	3	12	41-43	39
9 Stuttgart	27	9	8	10	31-32	35
10 Wolfsburg	27	9	7	11	46-41	34
11 Hamburger	27	9	7	11	39-45	34
12 Borussia (M)	27	7	9	11	29-40	30

GREEK FIRST DIVISION

OLYMPIAKOS IN SIX-GOAL ROUT OF ETHNIKOS ASTERAS

Olympiakos tightened their grip on the leadership of the Greek first division with an impressive 6-0 demolition of Ethnikos Asteras on Sunday.

Peter Oforiquaye was the star of the show for the Athens giants as he smashed a hat-trick inside six second-half minutes.

Predrag Djordjevic, Alekos Alexandris and Giovanni also got on the scoresheet, but the result was marred by injuries to Alexandris and goalkeeper Kleopas Ioannou.

Looking forward to the run-in, manager Takis Lemonis said: "We must now think only of Panathinaikos and our injuries, of which I am very concerned and disappointed."

AEK remain in contention after a 1-0 victory at



Ghanaian international Peter Oforiquaye bagged a hat-trick for Olympiakos as they trounced Ethnikos 6-0.

Akratitos. The visitors had goalkeeper Dionysis Hiotis to thank for saving a second-minute penalty before Vasilis Tsartas scored the winner with a trademark free-kick.

Panathinaikos fought back from a goal down to beat Iraklis 2-1. The visitors looked on course for an impressive win when Sebastian Rampert gave them a 26th-minute lead.

But an Emanuel Olisadebe shot deflected off Goran Vlaovic and into the net with 17 minutes left, before Costas Halkias scored an own goal at the death.

PAOK enhanced their chances of claiming a Uefa Cup place with a 1-0 victory over Xanthi. The Salonika side controlled the majority of the game and won it courtesy of a Sladjan Spasic strike just before the break.

Aris claimed an excellent 2-1 win at OFI, while the games between Ionikos and Aegaleo and Panahaiki and Panionios ended one apiece.

Akratitos 0 AEK Athens 1, PAOK T'saloniki 1 Xanthi 0, OFI Crete 1 Aris T'saloniki 2, Ionikos 1 Aigaleo 1, Olymp. Piraeus 6 Eth. Asteras 0, Panathinaikos 2 Iraklis 1, Panahaiki 1 Panionios 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olymp. Piraeus	20	13	5	2	51	22	44
AEK Athens	20	14	1	5	44	20	43
Panathinaikos	20	12	5	3	36	16	41
PAOK T'saloniki	20	11	5	4	38	27	38
Xanthi	20	9	6	5	29	19	33
Iraklis	20	7	7	6	25	26	28
Aris T'saloniki	20	7	7	6	22	21	28
Panionios	20	6	8	6	28	29	26
OFI Crete	20	7	5	8	23	25	26
Aigaleo	20	5	4	11	22	38	19
Ionikos	20	3	7	10	15	36	16
Eth. Asteras	20	3	5	12	16	33	14
Akratitos	20	3	4	13	17	31	13
Panahaiki	20	1	9	10	19	42	12

WORLD LEAGUES

CROATIAN FIRST DIVISION

TSK 0, Zagreb 2, Cibalia 1 Hajduk Split 1, Dinamo Zagreb 4 Kamen Ingrad 0, Sibenik 3 Slaven Belupo 0, Marsonia 1 Varteks 1, Cakovec 0 Osijek 2, Zadar 2 Rijeka 0, Pomorac 2 Hrvatski Dragovoljac 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Zagreb	23	18	4	1	63	18	58
2 Dinamo Zagreb	23	15	4	4	42	20	49
3 Hajduk Split	23	14	5	4	45	25	47
4 Varteks	23	13	5	4	45	26	45
5 Rijeka	23	11	4	8	34	27	37
6 Slaven Belupo	23	7	9	7	23	26	30
7 Pomorac	23	9	3	11	28	32	30
8 H. Dragovoljac	23	8	5	10	27	34	29
9 Cakovec	23	8	4	11	25	32	28
10 Sibenik	23	7	6	10	20	27	27
11 Zadar	23	6	7	10	25	34	25
12 Cibalia	23	6	6	11	23	30	24
13 Marsonia	23	6	6	11	24	32	24
14 Osijek	23	7	2	14	29	40	23
15 Kamen Ingrad	23	5	7	11	18	34	22
16 TSK	23	4	2	17	28	61	14

AUSTRIAN FIRST DIVISION

Karnten 2 Tirol 1, Sturm 1 Rapid 0, Admira Wacker 0 Grazer AK 2, Austria 2 Ried 0, Salzburg 2 Bregenz 1

	P	W	D	L	FA	Pnt
1 Tirol	26	19	3	4	50-8	60
2 Sturm	26	12	10	4	42-25	46
3 Grazer AK	26	12	8	6	50-32	44
4 Karnten	26	11	6	9	28-33	39
5 Salzburg	26	10	7	9	27-27	37
6 Austria	26	8	9	9	33-29	33
7 Rapid	26	8	6	12	23-31	30
8 Ried	26	6	8	12	29-41	26
9 Bregenz	26	6	8	12	31-55	26
10 Admira Wacker	26	3	5	18	16-48	14

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Porto 0 Alverca 0, Sporting CP 3 Paços de Ferreira 0, Boavista 2 St Clara 0, Marítimo 4 Braga 1, Vit. Setúbal 3 Gil Vicente 2, Beira-Mar 2 Leiria 0, Varzim 0 Vit. Guimarães 0, Salgueiros 1 Belenenses 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting CP	27	18	6	3	60	20	60
Boavista	27	18	5	4	44	14	59
Porto	27	15	4	8	46	28	49
Benfica	26	13	9	4	47	30	48
Marítimo	27	14	3	10	40	28	45
Belenenses	27	13	5	9	41	36	44
Leiria	27	11	8	8	40	29	41
Vit. Guimarães	27	10	8	9	28	25	38
Paços de Ferreira	27	9	9	9	36	37	36
St Clara	27	9	7	11	25	34	34
Braga	27	8	9	10	31	29	33
Beira-Mar	27	8	7	12	40	47	31
Vit. Setúbal	27	7	8	12	30	34	29
Varzim	27	6	7	14	22	46	25
Salgueiros	27	6	6	15	22	57	24
Gil Vicente	26	6	6	14	25	43	24
Alverca	26	6	5	15	27	47	23
Farense	26	5	6	15	20	40	21

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 23	TOTAL							PTS	HOME							AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A		
PERTH GLORY	21	15	5	1	2	48	20	50	11	8	3	0	23	8	10	7	2	1	25	12		
NEWCASTLE UNITED	22	9	11	2	1	30	20	38	11	6	5	0	15	6	11	3	6	2	15	14		
OLYMPIC SHARKS	21	11	3	7	2	29	18	36	10	6	3	1	14	4	11	5	0	6	15	12		
BRISBANE STRIKERS	21	9	6	6	2	36	29	33	10	5	2	3	19	13	11	4	6	3	17	16		
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	21	10	2	9	2	35	33	32	11	5	2	4	15	16	10	5	0	5	20	17		
SOUTH MELBOURNE	21	8	6	7	2	23	19	30	12	5	2	5	14	13	9	3	4	2	9	5		
NORTHERN SPIRIT	22	8	6	8	1	29	35	30	11	5	2	4	14	17	11	3	4	4	15	18		
PARRAMATTA POWER	22	8	4	10	1	29	30	28	11	5	1	5	14	14	11	3	3	5	15	16		
MARCONI STALLIONS	21	7	5	9	2	26	29	26	11	5	3	3	18	15	10	2	2	6	8	14		
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	21	6	7	8	2	23	30	25	9	3	1	6	10	15	11	3	4	4	12	15		
SYDNEY UNITED	21	5	5	11	2	24	33	20	11	1	4	6	12	21	10	5	1	4	15	12		
ADELAIDE CITY	21	3	7	11	2	23	35	16	10	3	4	3	16	16	11	0	3	8	7	19		
KINGZ FC	21	3	5	13	1	25	48	14	11	3	3	5	12	27	10	0	2	8	13	24		

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

(S Young 22, 53, N Sekulovski 84)

BRISBANE STRIKERS

(K Trajanovski 12)

Venue: WIN Stadium. Crowd: 2,372. Referee: C. Zetter
Cautions: C Anthopoulos (WW) 68, J Carbone (PG) 29, M Baird (PG) 55, A Webber (PG) 67.

Teams: **WOLLONGONG WOLVES:** Anastasiadis, Ceccoli, Stanton, Cervinski (Souris 58), Young, Sekulovski (Perinich 84), Austin (Castro 81), Anthopoulos, Huxley, Mennillo, Wells.
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Kearton, Alagich (Drake 78), Stefanutto, McKain, McLaren, Grierson (Baird 24) (Rose 63), Rech, Webber, Trajanovski, Carbone, McKay.

KINGZ FC

(H Ngata 8)

PARRAMATTA POWER

(P Bennett 27, B Holman 40, 74, A Kwasnik 51, A Elrich 61, 88, M Thompson 84)

Venue: Ericsson Stadium. Crowd: 2,443. Referee: C. Diomis.
Cautions: Nil

Teams: **KINGZ FC:** Theoklitos, Perry, Goutzioulis, Urlovic, Vlahos, Ngata, Markovski (Miyazawa 75), Burton (Osman 77), Banks (Campbell 61), Jackson, Douglas.
PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Barrett, Tobin, O'Sullivan (Thompson 78), Brown, Holman, Elrich, Vrkic, Eagleton (Groves 79), Kwasnik (Buonavoglia 61), Bennett.

MARCONI STALLIONS

(R Brownlie 51, 93)

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

(N Budin 25)

Venue: Marconi Stadium. Crowd: 2,623. Referee: E. Lennie.
Cautions: M Beauchamp (MS) 80, I Fyfe (ACF) 56, A Vidmar (ACF) 58, L Pantelis (ACF) 86.

Teams: **MARCONI STALLIONS:** Turnbull, Beauchamp, Costanzo, Longo, Care, Last (Renaud 46), Maisano, Bozinovski (Afkos 68), Webb (Tome 81), Brownlie, Brosque.
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagali, Fyfe, Kovacevic, Pantelis, Veart, Saraceno (Pellegrino 79), Vidmar, Tunbridge, Rees, Karlovic, Budin (Goulding 69).

SOUTH MELBOURNE

(P Trimboli 38, R Sekulovski 47, V Coveny 89)

OLYMPIC SHARKS

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. Crowd: 8,594. Referee: A. Nardi.
Cautions: S Panopoulos (SM) 64, A Durante (OS) 18, A Juric (OS) 30, H Ishida (OS) 37, W Srhoj (OS) 48, A Packer (OS) 64.

Teams: **SOUTH MELBOURNE:** Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Durakovic, Panopoulos, Coveny, Trimboli (Sabljak 76), Sekulovski, Murdocca (Lia 90), Kisporbo, Boutsianis (Buljan 72).
OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Srhoj (Augerinos 83), Wilson, Pondejak, Macallister (Harris 69), Halpin, Packer, Durante, Caravella (Harris 69), Ishida, Juric.

SYDNEY UNITED

(G Mendez 76)

NORTHERN SPIRIT

(P Cardozo 37)

Venue: Sydney United SC. Crowd: 2,280. Referee: M. Shield.
Cautions: P Bilokapic (SU) 43, V Knezevic (SU) 55, G Mendez (SU) 76, R Enes (NS), P Cardozo (NS) 87.
Red Cards: R Enes (NS) 77.

Teams: **SYDNEY UNITED:** Knezevic, Curico (Talevski 45), Moric (Bosnar 60), Mendez, Santalab (Watkins 75), Deur, Genc, Menapi, Bilokapic, Cindric, Sinozic.
NORTHERN SPIRIT: Acevski, Bell, Spencer, Trajkovski, Foster, Cardozo, Hutchinson (A Griffiths 59), Stergiopoulos, Cartwright, Enes, R Griffiths (Dobbie 72).

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

(K Marusic 18, I De Jesus 25 pen)

SYDNEY UNITED

(C Menapi 9)

Venue: Knights Stadium. Crowd: 3,620. Referee: C. Zetter.
Cautions: A Kiratzoglou (MK) 25, S Ognenovski (MK) 71, S Sinozic (SU) 28, G Mendez (SU) 34, N Arrarte (SU) 59, V Savoca (SU) 61, C Menapi (SU) 71.
Red Cards: S Ognenovski (MK) 87, N Arrarte (SU) 78.

Teams: **MELBOURNE KNIGHTS:** McGrath, R Vargas, Ognenovski, Horvat, Marth, Marusic, Porter, Da Costa, Kiratzoglou (Jolic 85), A Vargas, De Jesus (Sulemani 73).
SYDNEY UNITED: Knezevic, Savoca, Olic, Arrarte, Mendez, Deur (Moric 46), Talevski (Santalab 46), Menapi, Bilokapic, Watkins, Sinozic.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



Royce Brownlie: Stallions striker can't stop scoring grabbing a brace against the Force and currently sitting on nine goals.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	17
FOSTER Paul	Brisbane Strikers	13
CARDOZO Pablo	Northern Spirit	12
DESPOTOVSKI Bobby	Perth Glory	11
PORTER Joel	Melbourne Knights	10
MILICIC Ante	Olympic Sharks	10
DA COSTA Toto	Melbourne Knights	9
RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers	9
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle	9
BROWNIE Royce	Marconi	9
URLOVIC Paul	Kingz FC	8

ROUND 24

FRIDAY MARCH 22

Newcastle Utd vs Kingz FC
Adelaide City vs Perth Glory

SATURDAY MARCH 23

Parramatta Power vs Sydney United
Brisbane Strikers vs South Melbourne

SUNDAY MARCH 24

Olympic Sharks vs Marconi Stallions
Melbourne Knights vs Wollongong Wolves
Northern Spirit - Bye

BYE - MELBOURNE KNIGHTS